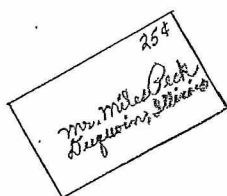
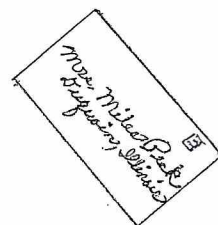


*Perry County Historical Society*  
*Genealogy Branch*



**Letters From The Past**



*By or To the family of Miles Peck*  
*1837 to 1907*

*Inez Bost Eisenhower, Feb. 1996*

## FOREWORD

The transcription of the Peck letters were brought to my attention when a friend said I should read them for Du Quoin was throughout them. I was thoroughly amazed to find a son-in-laws ancestors mentioned in the letters, plus many of the names I had come across when doing research. The originals were for sale but the recently organized Perry County Historical Society could not afford the price and I was not inclined to buy them. The longer I thought about these letters, the more I was intrigued with them. I finally decided to see about purchasing them.

Also a friend had told me quite a bit about the family and of the murder of a member of the family. This victim had the letters in his possession at the time of his death. I then contacted the dealer about buying the letters and were told they had sold to another dealer, no address available.

I then heard of a surviving relative and on contacting this relative was told the letters had surely been stolen at the time of the murder, as the murder victim carefully kept all pieces of family history. On the relatives behalf I was to try and get the letters or a transcript of them.

After telling the dealer the story of murder and probable theft, plus the thought that much of the relative's family history was contained in these letters, I was finally allowed to copy the transcript. One copy was sent to the relative and a copy kept by me, with the relative's permission to use the letters if so desired for the Perry County Historical Society.

These letters permit a glimpse into the lives of the early settlers, their trials and tribulations. Sometimes sad, sometimes joyous, these people helped mold the 1800s.

Old DuQuoin or Duquoin, as the name was written in early days, evolved from the Indian camp of Chief Jean Baptiste Duquoin. There was a river crossing near the camp and since the Indians were friendly, people began to settle there. Eventually the Indians left and the village began in earnest.

The railroad was completed in 1854 and many moved businesses and residences to be near the "station", as it was then called. As more and more settlers came, the "station" became known as DuQuoin. It had been platted in 1853 and official dedication ceremonies were on September 20. The original settlement later became Old DuQuoin. There had been much controversy about the correct spelling of the town name. On March 1, 1933, the official name became Du Quoin with a space between the words.

When reading these letters, please remember that spelling was not standardized when the earliest were written, plus many of these writers had only a small amount of schooling. But they did write, which is to our benefit.

Joseph Peck was born in 1837 and died April 15, 1907 and is buried in the Old Du Quoin cemetery with his wife and his parents. Prior to the Civil War he attended college in Jacksonville, Illinois. Joseph Peck was mustered out of service November 17, 1864 as a private, Company I. His future wife, "Addie" is listed as a pupil of the Old Du Quoin seminary in 1858.

He married Adalaine Burbank and had a daughter May. They lived at the family homestead which was located in T6S, R1W, Section 27. The 1890 real estate tax list shows 40 acres billed to J. E. Peck. May married John Campbell. Their children were Beulah and John Miles Campbell. John Miles Campbell died tragically on March 19, 1978 when he was murdered and burned in his house trailer. He had been the caretaker of the Old Du Quoin cemetery for a very long time. A Civil War sword which had belonged to his grandfather, Joseph Peck, disappeared at the time of the fire. It was later found but the Peck family letters ended up in other hands, were transcribed and later sold.

In October, 1874, the DuQuoin Tribune reported that Peck's home had been broken into and some silverware and china stolen. He wrote a small ( 5 X 7 3/4 inches) book of 63 pages. It was titled "Soul Problems with other papers" and was published in 1875 by Charles P. Somerby, 139 Eighth St., New York. The book dealt with the "immateriality of the mind." From one of the letters it apparently did not sell very well.

George W. Wall become an attorney in Du Quoin.

My THANKS to Rev. Merle Fullerton, nephew of the second John Campbell, for the use of these letters, and to Charles Hartsock for his assistance on background of the Peck family and recollections of the Old Du Quoin community.

INEZ EISENHAUER, OCT., 1995



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In the 1850 Perry Co. Census, Miles Peck was 47 years old, born in Connecticut, Celina was 46 years old, born in Connecticut and Joseph was 12 years, born in Missouri.

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This book and others published by the Perry County Historical Society are available at:

Perry County Jail Museum  
108 W. Jackson St.  
Pinckneyville, IL, 62274

Phone (618) 357-2225



# Cemetery sexton dies in fire at Old Du Quoin

TUE MAR 21 1978

TUE MAR 21 1978

John M. Campbell, 64, of Route 1, Du Quoin, was pronounced dead at the scene of a fire in his home Monday, March 20, 1978.

An inquest is pending.

Mr. Campbell was a lifetime resident of Du Quoin, and had been the caretaker of the Old Du Quoin Cemetery for 34 years.

He was a familiar fixture in Du Quoin, known for the maritime cap he wore, his 12 cats, and the carousel he had built in the yard of his house

in the woods behind the cemetery. He made many friends while hitching rides from town to the cemetery.

He was the last surviving member of the Campbell family that had helped found the original city of Du Quoin. He lived in a house with neither electricity nor running water.

He was a member of the Old Du Quoin Baptist Church.

He was born Oct. 11, 1913, in Du Quoin, to John C. and May F. Peck Campbell.

Survivors include two nephews, The Rev. Merle Fullerton of Mt. Vernon and Arthur M. Fullerton of Centralia; and three nieces, Mary Miller of Mt. Vernon, Doris Boldrey of Woodlawn and Phyllis Fullerton of Salem.

He was preceded in death by one sister.

Graveside services will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday at the Old Du Quoin Cemetery.

Friends may call after 6 p.m. today at the Maxton Funeral Home.

## New information

# Perry County coroner seeks

SUN AUG 13 1978

# to exhume fire victim's body

The body of the late John C. Campbell who was found dead after a fire last March at his home near DuQuoin may be exhumed because of information received recently by Perry County Coroner Frank Maxton.

Mr. Campbell, 64, was pronounced dead March 20 after his body was removed from his home that had been nearly destroyed by fire during the night of March 19.

He lived in a house without electricity or running water behind the Old Du Quoin Cemetery where he had been caretaker for nearly 34 years.

A Du Quoin newspaper reported Friday that Perry County authorities are seeking evidence that Mr. Campbell may have been injured by an intruder before the house burned.

Maxton said an inquest into the Campbell death was held in April.

Cause of death was then determined to be accidental because of the fire.

"No autopsy was held since there was never any reason to believe his death was anything but from the fire in his stove-heated home," Maxton said.

"But since then, because of information that has come directly to me, I feel it is necessary to determine whether he died because of the fire or was a victim of foul play."

Maxton said no one is in custody as a result of the new information.

He said attempts are being made to get the consent of Mr. Campbell's only survivors, two nephews and three nieces, to exhume the body from the Old Du Quoin Cemetery.

If he receives their permission, Maxton said he can go ahead with the exhumation and autopsy. Maxton said that if he cannot get the family's consent, he can ask for a court order.



# Witness says defendant admitted arson-slaying

FRI JUN 01 1979

FRI JUN 01 1979

By Evan M. Davis  
Of The Southern Illinoisan

A self-described friend of accused murderer Stanley Keith Lawler testified Thursday that Lawler admitted clubbing, stabbing and burning an old man who lived near Du Quoin.

Lawler, 18, is on trial in Perry County Circuit Court in Pinckneyville for the March 15, 1978 death of John M. Campbell, 64, who lived near Du Quoin. Lawler also is accused of burning Campbell's house, where Campbell's charred remains were found.

Lawler said he had taken three doses of an "acid" (LSD) called "orange sunshine," Stephen B. Denton of Mount Vernon testified. Then, according to Denton's account of Lawler's story, Lawler hid in nearby woods until dark, found a club, hit the man seven times in the head, stabbed him three times in the abdomen with a pocket knife, poured kerosene over him, ignited it, and then returned to the woods to watch the fire.

According to the witness' account, the victim still was alive when he was doused with kerosene. "The man was saying, 'Help me. Help me,'" Denton quoted Lawler as saying.

Lawler, also from Mount Vernon, killed the man to take \$45, according to Denton's testimony.

Denton did not say Lawler named Campbell as his victim, but the witness testified that Lawler said the man "was pretty old, lived by himself, sort of like a hermit."

Other witnesses have testified that Campbell lived alone, without electricity or running water.

Campbell's neighbor, Kenneth Stacey, testified that Lawler was at the scene of the Campbell fire and was actually the person who told him about it. He said

he and Lawler tried to enter the house, saw only smoke, and ran around the house calling Campbell's name.

Lawler's grandfather, Stanley Stamm, who lives on the other side of Stacey from the Campbell house, testified that Lawler had been staying with him and Mrs. Stamm over the weekend. The fire occurred on a Sunday night.

Both Stamm and Stacey testified that they had seen Lawler talking with Campbell in Campbell's yard the day of the fire.

Denton said Lawler made his confession sometime after Jan. 4, the date Lawler received a subpoena to attend a Perry County coroner's inquest into Campbell's death.

Denton said he was with Lawler when the subpoena was served and that Lawler looked "shocked." Denton testified that they did not discuss Campbell's death that day, but when they did later, Lawler confessed in response to Denton's questions.

"I kept asking him about it," Denton said. "I just really wanted to know because he seemed kind of worried."

Denton said he first brought Lawler's confession to the attention of authorities about two and a half weeks after he heard it while incarcerated himself in the Jefferson County Jail at Mt. Vernon. Denton gave his statement to Roy Bradford, chief deputy in the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department.

Under questioning from defense attorney Gerald Sims, Denton said that after the confession, whenever he and Lawler talked about the incident, Lawler denied he attacked the man.

"I'd kid him and say, 'You shouldn't have done it,'" Denton testified. "He'd say, 'I didn't do it.'"

Sims asked Denton if he had believed Lawler's confession. "Not at first,"

Denton answered, "but when someone does three hits of acid, you're liable to do anything."

Sims noted that the only evidence Lawler ever took the drugs was also in the alleged confession.

Sims also asked Denton why he gave his statement to Bradford.

"It kind of bothered me, thinking about it," Denton said. "I thought about it all the time — just thought about pouring kerosene over someone while they're still alive, saying 'Help me. Help me.' It bothered me."

Today, State's Attorney Lloyd Middleton built his case for the theory that Campbell suffered head injuries just before his death and was alive when the fire started.

Dr. Harry Parks, a Belleville pathologist who performed the autopsy on Campbell, testified that Campbell had a large blood clot on the back of his brain and a broken jaw. He said both conditions were "acute," meaning they had not had time to show any evidence of healing.

Dr. Parks, who said the main cause of death was probably fourth degree burns, also testified that soot was found in the small air sacs of Campbell's lungs. That evidence, he said, "proves beyond a doubt that the patient was breathing at the time of the fire."

On Thursday, Gary Ashman, a special agent with the Illinois Department of Law Enforcement and a doctor of chiropractic, testified that he witnessed the autopsy. Ashman said the blood clot could not have formed after Campbell's death because the body's clotting system would not have been functioning.

Dr. Parks listed the clot as perhaps a secondary cause of death, but he said there is a possibility it was formed by gravity after Campbell died.



# Body of DuQuoin cemetery caretaker to be disinterred, ordered for autopsy

FRI NOV 3 1978

FRI NOV 3 1978

An autopsy on the body of a Du Quoin man, a former cemetery caretaker who was found dead last March after a fire in his home, will be performed early next week, according to Perry County Coroner Frank Maxton.

A court order issued Wednesday permits exhumation of the body of John Campbell, former caretaker of Old Du Quoin Cemetery.

The order was sought last Aug. 20 after Maxton was contacted by a military doctor in Georgia. Perry County State's

Attorney Lloyd Middleton said it took time to obtain consent from cemetery officials and Campbell's relatives to disinter the body.

The military doctor suggested that the death might have been other than accidental after he had contact with an individual who was present at the fire, Middleton said.

No charges have been brought in connection with the death, he added. Further details about the evidence sugges-

ting foul play were not available.

Campbell's burned body was recovered from a fire which broke out in his home near Old Du Quoin cemetery shortly after midnight March 20. Campbell had been the cemetery caretaker for 34 years.

An inquest last April concluded that Campbell's death was accidental.

"No autopsy was held since there was never any reason to believe his death was anything but from fire in his stove-heated home," Maxton said last August.

The last article, dated June 3, 1979, has been rearranged to fit the page.



# Jury finds Lawler innocent of

SUN JUN 03 1979

## John Miles Campbell murder

SUN JUN 03 1979

By Evan M. Davis

Of The Southern Illinoisan

Stanley Keith Lawler of Mount Vernon was found innocent of murder and arson by a Perry County jury in Pinckneyville.

Upon hearing the verdict, the 18-year old, red-cheeked Lawler, who had sat quietly — almost impassively — through his three-day trial in the Perry County Courthouse, bowed his head upon his clasped hands.

Lawler's mother Wanda cried, "Oh, thank God!" and as the jurors filed out of the courtroom; his father Lonnie told them, "We love you. We love you."

State's Attorney Lloyd Middleton said, "The state felt the evidence was sufficient for a conviction. The jury thought otherwise and voted not guilty verdicts."

The verdicts were returned shortly before 10:30 Friday night, five hours after the jury was sequestered.

Lawler was indicted in March 1979 in connection with the March 19, 1978, death of John Miles Campbell, 64, who took care of and lived next to the Old Du Quoin Cemetery. Campbell's remains were found under the debris of planation of how he was discharged, not as a description of a murder he actually had committed.

Middleton put Denton back on the witness stand and Denton again said Lawler told him the story as a factual account, not as just a tale he had told the doctor to get out of the Army.

Lawler also denied he ever took LSD. He said he did not mention LSD to Denton when he first told him the murder story, but did in a later conversation.

"To justify my actions in his eyes, I told him I had taken LSD," Lawler said.

Middleton asked Lawler if he concocted the LSD angle because he thought Denton was believing the main story, "didn't want Denton to think you were a cold-blooded murderer," and preferred Denton to think he had been high on drugs. Lawler said that was correct.

Lawler said he and Denton talked about the incident four or five times and on one occasion after the first conversation he told Denton he did kill the man. On the other occasions, Lawler said, he told Denton he did not.

Besides the confessions, the other ma-

his small house after a fire.

The coroner's inquest held shortly after Campbell died found the death accidental but subsequent evidence pointed to Lawler. Campbell's body was exhumed and an autopsy was performed Nov. 8.

The jury of 11 women and one man faced two basic questions: whether Campbell died by accident or murder, and if by murder, whether Lawler was the murderer.

The questions were closely tied because no one suspected murder until Lawler made an informal confession in Georgia last year that was brought to the attention of Illinois authorities. Grand jury testimony about a second confession early this year led to his indictment.

Lawler took the stand Friday afternoon to say both confessions were only stories.

The first confession was made to Capt. Michael Vanderwald, a U.S. Army psychiatrist at Ft. Gordon, Ga., where Lawler was in his fourth month of training last July.

Middleton read Vanderwald's written statement Friday. The statement said for evidence of murder was a pair of head injuries found on Campbell's body during the autopsy. One was a large blood clot on the back of the brain and the other was a jaw fracture.

Belleville pathologist Dr. Harry Parks, who performed the autopsy, testified that though Campbell probably was killed by the fire, he sustained the head injuries at or near the time of death.

Middleton argued that Lawler caused the injuries by hitting Campbell on the head with a club.

Defense attorney Gerald Sims reminded the jury that Parks said the blood clot could have been caused by a fall. Sims hypothesized that Campbell was hit on the jaw by a burning beam and fell on his head, but Sims also said no one really knows how Campbell died.

Sims also noted that the autopsy only revealed two head injuries, but Denton said Lawler told him he hit the victim seven times. Further, the autopsy revealed no evidence of injuries to internal organs, such as would have been inflicted by the abdominal stabbings described in Denton's testimony.

While refuting Denton's testimony,

Lawler told the doctor that while staying with his grandparents he met an old man and killed him to take his pension money.

Lawler testified he was ordered to see the psychiatrist because he had been caught smoking marijuana. He said he wanted to get out of the Army and was assured by the doctor that their conversation would be confidential.

"I had a feeling in my own mind," Lawler said, "that I could receive a discharge from the service if I told him something that would shock him."

Lawler said he received an honorable discharge a month later as a person unsuitable for the Army, because of the marijuana incident and what he had told the doctor.

The second confession was made to Lawler's friend, Stephen B. Denton, 19, also of Mount Vernon. Denton testified Thursday that Lawler told him he had beaten, stabbed, burned and robbed an old man after taking three doses of LSD.

Lawler testified he told Denton his story after Denton asked him how he got out of the Army so quickly. Lawler said he told Denton the story as an ex-Lawler also told his version of the actual events of March 19, 1978. He said he was in his grandparents' home near Campbell's house until about 8 p.m. when he went next door to visit Mary Stacey. The Stacey property also bordered Campbell's.

Lawler said he left at about 8:40 p.m. and went to his grandfather's tool shed to prepare a marijuana cigarette. He said he smoked the cigarette in his grandparents' front yard until he noticed the fire at Campbell's house.

Upon seeing the fire, Lawler said, he told his grandmother and then ran next door to tell Kenneth Stacey, Mary's father. He and Stacey then ran to Campbell's, where Stacey opened the front door but was driven back by smoke.

Lawler and Stacey then ran around the house calling Campbell's name, but got no answer, Lawler said. He also said he broke in a window in an effort to find Campbell.

Earlier testimony by Stacey closely matched Lawler's from the point where Lawler told Stacey about the fire.

Mary Stacey and Lawler's grandmother, Sophie Stamm, were not called as witnesses in the trial by either side.



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

Post mark: Groton, New York, Feb. 23, 1837

No stamp, marked "25¢"

Address: MILES PECK, Springfield, Sangamon Co. Illinois

Groton Feb. 21, 1837

Dear Brother

I would now inform you that your letter of Dec. was read about the first of Jan. with much joy and gratitude to find that He, who rules over all and from whom we receive all our blessings has protected you and yours and permitted you to arrive in safety at the place of destination and that the prospect of your future enjoyment of the things of this world appear to be so flattering. But dear brother let us ever remember that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he poseth, hence may we learn and realize the fact that we are to look to another source for real and substantial good and may we be inclined to make the word of Him who cannot err for our guide may it prove indeed to be a light to our feet and a lamp to our path to cheer us on our way through this wilderness world. You have probably been anxious for an answer to your letter. The reason of my delay is that I was waiting for Mr. NORTON and his wife to return from Ct. and to have further -----with the waggon maker and others respecting your request. I think it doubtful whether I shall succeed in getting any mechanic to go according to your request but the wagon maker talks of you -----somewhere and I shall endeavor to influence him to go to your plan. I was at home a few days since Mr. NORTON had just returned, come home sick was-----well got but little information what was -----except that ----- was named etc.-----respecting to move on in the spring and take with them one or more workmen to tare up -----, As it -----to mother, Mr. NORTON thought she felt somewhat disappointed to find that he had sold his farm and that he was like to remain unsettled for a year as he wished to make a journey next summer to the west as far as Ohio and farther perhaps. He may visit you but I think it very doubtful as he wishes me to keep a little look out for him here this winter for a farm, farms being offered and sold every few days. HORACE DELANO has sold his and many others. LUTHER BENNY has bought SYLVANUS DELANO's farm provided he can get the money by the first of April, he has written to Ct. to his friend STUART but has not recd an answer yet, so it remains uncertain. As to your affairs in this country I would say that I have need of Esq. GRUMMON \$11. 1st, but I called on him the same week I left you, found he had sold the cow for \$15 thought it doubtful whether he could get much more for you, regreted very much that he could not see you. Mr. COLE a few weeks since sent me \$110. to apply on the note you left with and after being duned repeatedly I hope however the remainder will come by and by without further-----, With regard to my visiting you next season it seems to be somewhat uncertain for several reasons one of which is a portion of our citizens here are trying to get a rail road from Auburn through this town-----intersect with the Ithica-----a little south of Ithica, we have gone so far with it as to get it surveyed and the books are open, considerable stock is already taken. I with the rest have taken some and do not know when it will be called for, it being not you found a man that I can-----that I should be willing to leave my business-----help as I want is scarce and wages-----by NORTON that the Boys-----coming on with a waggon but they will be full and no chance for me to ride with them. I have done nothing yet about getting such an establishment as you named in your letter thinking I had better wait until I was more certain that I should need it and one other reason I see by the papers that there is some prospect that government will prohibit the sale of land except to actual settlers, and I learn by your letter that you are not like to succeed in selling village property this winter as you anticipated and of course will not be prepared to do this spring as you thought you should last fall, and perhaps I had better not come out till you have made further arrangements, but I wish you to write to immediately on receiving this and let me know how you are getting along with your affairs and what you now think about my coming out with the boys and -----what kind of horses will best suit as to age size and price for if I should come with a span of horses and light wagon as you proposed I should wish to sell the whole. I think it doubtful whether I can buy horses here as low as they are sold with you and fear mine would be more loss on the horses than gain on the wagon, for this reason I wish further information from you, I learn from NORTON that our friends in Ct. most of them -----you have probably heard of Mr. DEAN of -----Park by small pox also several others-----but I believe it has now entirely-----, -----rather more

## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

sickness than-----winter little CLINTON BERRY-----, some weeks but has recovered---  
-----some much afflicted with a distemper-----of a cold, we, are now on tolerable-----a  
plenty of snow and good sleighing-----is not so scarce as my last-----a few days of extreme  
cold-----for all kinds of produce is uncommon-----eat from 16 to 17 shillings per bushel---  
--from 8 to 9 do pork and beef and coarse grown-----.

I think by this time you will be tired of keeping out this rambling and so I leave you with my best wishes for your prosperity telling you that you are not forgotten by us for Uncle MILES & Aunt CELINA are much talked of by our little ones and I am frequently asked when we shall go to Illinois.

Yours affectionately JOSEPH PECK

Notwithstanding what I have written I do not give up entirely the idea of coming out to see you but I wish to hear from you again. I wish you would give information with respect to government land and whether I had better come prepared to -----some or not and also what kind of money will be best for me to get, please write immediately.

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Groton, N. Y., Nov. 16, 1837

No stamp, marked "25¢"

Address: Mr. MILES PECK, Springfield, Sangamon Co., Illinois

Dear Sir, I take this opportunity to inform you respecting that money that is in your hands, we have concluded to let you have it a while on condition, that you will give us land security for the same, you of course know the situation that the administrators are placed in. We are accountable to those heirs for this property and our bondsmen is holden for us therefore we think that it would be a proper course for us to take security in that way, if this should meet your mind, you will please to make out the security and lodge it in the Clerks office for us. It is thought most likely that the family will leave this place and buy them someplace in Groton hollow so that the Children may be better accomidated for schools & if that should take place if we hold the money here it would be very acceptable, but as it is situated we think that we can say you may keep it for one year if the proposals that we have made will meet your mind. We want that you should answer this as soon as is convenient and let us know what his expenses of his sickness was and his funeral charges move this from your & c

JOHN ASHTON

Affectionate brothers and sisters, it is with a heart full of sorrow that I attempt to write a few lines to you. I received your letter with news unexpected to us, his loss we deeply feel. The Lord hath done it and I must submit to it, my heart full of greef and eyes full of tears. I cannot write on such a painfull subject. We are all well, mother has wrote to you. We all send much love to you all.

PECK

This from your affectionate sister MARY ANN.

Affectionate--

Uncles and aunts. It is with some reluctance that I attempt to write a few lines to you, I feel as though the Lord had come very near to us. I hope that we shall not feel to murmur nor complain at his doings for he does all things right. Little did I think when he went from here that I never should see him again, it seems as though it were not possible that he was dead and that I never more was to see his face in this world but it is a consoling thought to think that he has gone to a better world, a world where peace and joy never end and we all shall meet him there. I trust if we hold out faithful to the end. The Children often speak of their father with tears in their eyes. I hope that we all may look to god who has promised to be Father to the fatherless. We looked for him week after week until we received the letter that brought the sad news that he was no more. We had a sermon preached the next Sabbath. The text was in John, 13 Chapter, 7th verse. Mothers wrist is very lame yet. Mother would like to know if father had received her letter. We send our warmest thanks for your kind attention to him through his last sickness, to have waited upon him. Write as soon as convenient. This from your affectionate niece MARY E. PECK.  
We have just received the sad news of Aunt JULIANN's death. We have not heard the particulars



LETTERS FROM THE PAST

nor when she died.

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Brandenburg, Ky. Aug 25, 1840

No stamp, marked "25¢"

Addressed: Mrs. CELINA PECK, Warren Litchfield Co., Conn.

Brandenburg, 24 August, 1840

My Dearest Celina

I am yet here and so far recovered as to be able to walk about the house a little and intend to take a boat tomorrow if I can manage to get on and (for Pekin). It is now on the tenth week since I have been confined here, my suffering has been great but I suppose it all wisely ordered. I think I feel to bless the Lord for my recovery and I am resolved to try to serve him and obey his requirements better than I ever yet have done so that I may fully obey the requirements of God and know the peace that arrises from believing in Jesus.

I received yours many days since, was glad to hear that you and our fine little boy was in health. I want to see you and him very much indeed. I would like for you to come to Ohio if a convenient opportunity but it will be impossible for me to send you any money in time for you mentioned if some one that you-----come with will pay your expenses out perhaps you could borrow of your uncle until I come after you or call on BUCK and I think he will furnish it. I have \$14 due from a man near BUCK, perhaps he can collect that for you, I am not able to write and must stop.

I wish you to see CLARK and say to him that I wrote to the boys to place my spoons in the auction room to be sold and if so done I shall hope to meet him the payment but probably it will be a few days after the time that my spoons cannot get his money that he loaned but as he expected and therefore I think he must not depend on him for if Mr. B. wrote to CLARK that he would meet it for me but now there is no prospect but I think if I get back to Ill. soon and do not get worst that now, I can send it on. Say to him he must get SWIFTS to wait a little if possible. Do as you like about going to Ohio if you can but if you go call on mother if possible, she may like to go on with you if a good opportunity.

Remember me to father & mother and tell little Joseph father wants to see him and will come after him.

Love, your husband, MILES PECK

I had forgotten to say that I had a letter from STILES, HOMER returned from Missouri well and had good success in his business so I suppose our things are safe in Ill. They all enjoy better health than last year. Mr. NORTON & MERRY came out to STILES after I left and helps to money to pay our mortgages in Springfield.

Write on the reception of this whether you go to Ohio or not, direct to Middletown Logan Co. Ill. (The 'Stiles' mentioned above was a twin brother of Miles.)

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: St. Louis, Mo. Jan 13, 1840

No stamp, marked "Paid 21¢"

Address: Mrs. CELINA PECK, Warren Litchfield Co. Conn.

Audrein County Mo. 19th Dec. 1840

My Dear Wife,

It is a long time since I have written you and I fear that you will conclude that I have forsaken you or that some accident has befallen me. But be assured that although I have come far short of duty to you, in not writing as well as in every other respect, you are almost hourly in my mind. I do not know that this will reach you but suppose you still remain in Warren and I hope and pray that these few lines may find you and our little boy enjoying health and a degree of comfort. Our seperation is a much longer one than I anticipated when I left you, but believing it to have been the will of God that I should have been laid on a bed of sickness last summer I think it was undoubtedly intended for my good and I feel to acquiesse in it. My health has been gradually improving since I returned from Ky and now just comfortable, my strength has not fully returned. I have not heard from you since August and am very anxious to hear. I want to see you and Joseph very much. How does the little fellow, has he good health and is he a good boy as he use to be. It gives me much distress to think that I have not been able to render you any

## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

assistance by sending you money. I have not been able to get any that would help with you until lately and that one by the small sum of five dollars, which I will enclose in this. I have been toiling and moving about the county since I have been able to ride, doing my best to sell off my spoons and have succeeded but slowly. There is but little money in circulation and I cannot get but little more than to pay expenses. I have up to this time hardly one hundred dollars in cash. I traded for a lot of onion seed in the fall which I have shipped to New York for Starr & Hoffman which I am in hopes will do something about paying for my spoons, about 400 lb. which I hope to get \$1.50 per pound which will make \$1.00. I have written to CLARK about it, I don't know that it will sell at any price.

STILES & THOMAS all well the last time I was there, which has been about six weeks. I am now one hundred and twenty miles west of St. Louis and am going still farther west for the purpose of trading for fur & deer skins. I think I can do pretty in that trade for a while, I have traded My carriage for a two horse waggon & harness & one horse and have company in travelling, HIRAM PENOYER. We are expecting to go on south to Arkansas. Perhaps you will think I am making more of my wild calculations but it looks to me to be the best plan at present as we expect it to be a better place to purchase peltry and probably as good sale of spoons. I am thinking it cannot be worse.

According to our present plans I shall not be able to reach Warren before the first of April. As to what to persue next summer I hardly know what to do. I have thought some of going to Galesburg, Knox Co. Ill. provided it should meet your mind and rent a house and employ my time in peddling dry goods for the present, but then again I am not sure. That I can in any way purchase very much will depend on my success this winter. Galesburg is a village built mostly by people from the state of New York and within about three years or four, and now contains about eighty dwellings, a state of society equal to any in the east. A church of about three hundred members, a college female seminary and district schools all in successful operation. I do think you would like to live there as well as any other in Ill. provided that I can engage in business that will warrant. If AARON PENOYER is building a house in Galesburg, which I have partially engaged, I can have it in the spring and pay the rent by boarding him. I don't know which is best, to go there or go to Springfield and follow peddling in the country or go and live on farming land with the boy. (As) to farming we have not got any house and the boys have not yet been able to build. They still live in the old cabin. I am so much in debt is the great objection to farming and especially where the farm is not made and nothing to live in and if I am not successful this winter and raise more money than it seems possible to do. I do not see how I can live in Ill. or the west any where. I wish you to write me on the reception of this. Write whether you think best to go to Galesburg or where.

Little Rock City, Arkansas state, near St. Charles Mo. We are now on our return from the west of Mo. have had an unpleasant and not the most prosperous trip. I am almost discouraged in trying to undertake anything, but still necessity compells me to press forward. We are now setting pace to the south in hopes to reach the state of Arkansas. It is impossible to say what time I can be in Warren but I hear it will be late in the year though I shall use every exertion to dispose of my ----- so as to raise enough to pay for it at least and when that is done I shall not be long in executing my journey east. I wish you to say to CLARK that I wish him to take a little trouble to dispose of my onion seed which I shipped to New York. If it does not sell there I think he can exchange it for something, if it will not sell for money, sell it at what price he can get. It must be sold if only at 32¢ per lb. but it ought to bring-----, I hope you and JOSEPH are enjoying the blessing of health for which we will feel grateful to our Heavenly Father although we are deprived of almost every other blessing. I would give anything to see or hear from you and little JOSEPH. It gives me distress in extreme when I reflect on the time of parting with you and little JOSEPH and of the anxiety and expectation in which the little fellow has looked for my return. Say to him that if I am permitted to return to you and him again that I will never be long absent any more. Remember me to your father & mother.

Your Afct. Husband MILES PECK

\* \* \* \* \*



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

Post Mark: Moscow, Ky.

Addressed: Mrs. CELINA PECK, DuQuoin, Perry Co. Illinois

No stamp, marked "Paid 5¢"

(Hickman Co.)

Moscow Ky 6 June A. D., 1848

Dear Wife & little son

It appears to me a long time since I left home, more so than it would, could I hear from you often. I have not heard anything from you since I left you and I am very anxious to receive a letter hoping to hear that you both are enjoying good health, my only hope and consolation is in knowing that you are in the hand of an all wise and benevolent god to whom we may and ought to place all our confidence trusting in him to protect us from all dangers and troubles provided we but obey and submit to all his requirements with a humble submission. Oh that such of us may yield to and obey all the requirements of the supreme ruler of the universe and may we know the peace that may arise from believing in Jesus Christ our only Lord and Savior. I thank God that I can say to you that my health has been and now is very good for which favor I hope I may ever feel a due sense of gratitude to my benefactor. I can anticipate how you are getting along but cannot know the reality. I suppose Joseph is a good boy working and assisting his mother in whatever there is to do and also in helping Mr. WM. BURBANK to attend the corn. I suppose the pigs and calves are all growing finely. Hope Charley and Poll has got well, but the little colt how does it grow. I think it must be a fine colt by this time. I expect JOSEPH will take pleasure in taking care of the thing and in being a farmer.

I will mention to you that we are doing a good business in selling pans, selling at \$25 cash and 30 on time, probably about one quarter through the job there is three of us old peddlers from Illinois Shop and two young fellows hired in this country at \$30 per month but can't peddle to do any good and we employ them to hand out fans for us & to peddle. We are selling about 6 pans per week, three of us making 18 to 20 per week. I am sorry that HIRAM did not come on with me. The country here and in Tenn. is far better than I had expected. It is a beautiful country of land is held in greater value than in Illinois where we live. Much of it is new but others very well settled. I have the last seven days been thirty or forty miles in Tennessee and sold 9 fans. The settlers in Tenn. I find to be of a higher grade good ----- and better informed than those Tenn. which we have been use to in Illinois. I have the best team of horses on the job, look and feel fine, but the eye of the one still continues to fail, will probably go blind. It is now in the midst of harvest, wheat, has been quantities cut the past week and will be the coming one. The wheat crop is fine here, it is a better wheat country than south Illinois. It is a busy time with us now selling fans, I have no lost time yet and I hope I may make each day count from the time I left home until I may return. If I could come home as I used to do last summer it would be a great satisfaction but I cannot and it may be long before I can get to come home unless necessity requires it. I suppose it will yet be at least four weeks--before our wheat will want cutting. You must get WM. B. or some one to get hands and do the harvesting by the day. I don't wish to give it all for harvesting but will pay the going wages by the day. If you do not receive money from me by mail sufficient to supply, call on McKEYS to let you have and I will replace it when I come. I have written you once, enclosed ten dollars and I will now enclose three dollars. I have written to a Mr. JOSEPH WILLIAMSON of Chester to send by mail----to me at DuQuoin the money for a fan should it come into his hands as I directed. If you receive that it will be as much as you will need and I will expect to hear soon from him or you whether he has received and sent it or not and should I not hear soon I will have to send more by mail from here so that you may not want funds to do harvesting. Then I wish you to ascertain if WM. BOSS\* or HENRY BURBANK will do the buying in time. I expect one or the other will do it by himself or BOSS & WEBSTER. If no one will do it just hire somebody to do it and pay money and if no one will do it on shares or for money, just let it alone. It will not hurt the land and I will in that case buy hay. I expect there will be no trouble in getting help for cash. I want you to be sure and write me on the receiving of this. You know that I must be anxious to hear. I suppose JOSEPH thinks the time long that I am gone and has cast many a longing look for me. I can anticipate that you both are lonely being entirely alone except for your dog Price, he is some company or rather protection especially in the dark hour of night. I would rather you would get some one to stay with you for



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

company. My best Love to yourself & JOSEPH.

MILES PECK

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\* (The WM. BOSS mentioned above was WILLIAM ALLEN BOST, great-grandfather of the compiler of these letters, Inez Bost Eisenhower. BOST had a mill in Desoto about this time.)

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: DuQuoin, Ill. C. R. R. Apr. 3, 1855  
Addressed: JOSEPH E. PECK or Mr. E. COBB

Duquoin Perry Co. Ill. 2 April 1855

Dear son, we received your letter of the 11 inst. last evening stating that you think ten dollars will answer your present wants - I now enclose that amount to you. I also sent five dollars by letter a week ago.

MILES PECK

Mr. E. COBB

Sir, should this come to your hand after JOSEPH has left and if he should have borrowed any money of you as I requested him to do in case of necessity, you will replace it with this if enough to do for and if he has not been under the necessity of borrowing then you will please to return this to me by letter and I will be much obliged. Yours

MILES PECK

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Lebanon, Ill, Dec 28, 1855  
Address: MR. JOSEPH E. PECK, Jacksonville, Illinois

Lebanon, Dec. 26th, 1855

Your last epistle was received some time since. You must excuse me for not answering sooner as I had to prepare for examinations and for an exhibition and of course I had but little time to spend otherwise.

You must understand that this is vacation. The faculty having granted one week for vacation - beginning last Thursday and ending tomorrow. But there will not be much done till New Years day is past. I have not been home. I rather intended to go, but I concluded that it would not pay - so I have been here all the time - But as the weather has been so unpleasant I am not sorry that I did not go - we have had some of the coldest weather imaginable, first rain then sleet and last came snow.

"Whiter than the mountains sleet En' from the cloud that gave it birth, It fell, and caught the stain of earth"

As much cold and unpleasant weather was and is not very conducive to patience and good feeling. Yet we must bear it with resignation always recollecting that

"Even the best must own  
Patience and resignation on the pillow  
Of human grace on earth  
And although  
Patience in a coward is hopeless fear  
Yet

In our patience we are strong"

The joint exhibition of the two societies come off on the 19th, to the satisfaction of all concerned. If I had a program I would send you one - It was pronounced the best thing of the kind that has been here in many years.

There were 22 speakers in all - the proformance consisted, prologue by the Plato Soc. - then six declarations - 4 essays, six orations, four debaters - and an epilogue by the Philo Soc. - with music, vocal and instrumental, interspersed to keep the audience awake. The old Chapel was crowded literally "filled to overflowing."

My studies for the ensuing term will be "Ovid's metamorphosis", Henophon's Memorabilia" and Analytical Geometry."



LETTERS FROM THE PAST

I had almost forgotten to say that I am well and hope these few lines will find you enjoying the same Gods blessing.

Write soon and give me all the news.

Truly Yours

G. W. WALL

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: DuQuoin Ill, Jan 1, 1856

Address: JOSEPH E. PECK, Jacksonville, Morgan County, Illinois

Sabbath eve, Dec. 30th (1855)

Dear Joseph

We received your last yesterday and was glad to hear of your welfare, that you received the money safe, passed a good examination. We shall probably receive the Presidents report of you soon - I hope my son that no one will have occasion to speak otherwise than well of you. Should you chance to give any one offence I hope you possess that nobleness of spirit which would lead you quickly to ask pardon. It has been extremely cold the last week with a little snow on the ground. No celebration of Christmas, every one, I suppose, hovered over their own fires. There was talk of a party at JOHN SPRAGES but Mrs. BEN SPRAGE being so low it was put off. The new Dr. has his wife and daughter, a young woman there. Mrs. ROOT has returned and lives with Mrs. SKINNER, ANN was well when he left her. I do not know much about DuQuoine as I have not been there in two months, but your father says they have another grocery there, TRUMANs old store being drawn on to the spot where EDWIN SMITH lived. The Seminary is small but the district school is so large that it is thought best to divide it and have one in the widow WOOD house. Mr. HINCKLYs store is raised. We had a Christmas gift of two more young calves and are looking for another, no buyers at present. We have not sold the pork yet, they are packing at DeSoto, probably we shall take it there, but it is too cold at present.

Your father will send you ten dollars in this and I hope when we write again we can send you more. You need something in the shape of a cloak or gentlemen shawl to wear when you go out this cold weather. Mr. BIRD took dinner here on Friday, he is quite well and fat as ever. He returned but left MARY. I expect a visit from her this week. If your wrappers give out you had better get some of red flannel. We will send you some money in every letter and you must do the best you can with it. If Mr. JENKINS wants it we must get it for him soon. You will need a suit of clothes to wear on nice occasions and get them large enough and long enough to wear every day next year if you should want. Perhaps you can do without them a little longer if you get something to wear over. Mr. BIRD had a very nice broadcloth cloak lined with plaid flannel but something lighter will do for you and when you get tired of it will do for me. Your father expects a letter from Saratoga, was in hopes to have got some house rent when we would have sent you more. Have you seen Mr. CURTISE, what is the given name of the new merchant SWIFT. I wish you would ask EDWARD TANNER when and what he has heard from your cousins ELISHA and LUCY TANNER of Oregon. I have scribbled this by candle light that it may be ready in the morning as your father with TRUMAN\* start early for Pinckneyville, they are to settle Mr. ZHINGs estate. Your canine friends are well. Good night.

Your affectionate mother  
C. PECK

\* \* \* \* \*

\*(TRUMAN is probably TRUMAN THING, he lived close to the Pecks. President Abraham Lincoln once complimented Celina in her nice handwriting.)

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Mendon, Ills Apr. 9, 1856

Address: MR. JOSEPH E. PECK, Duquoin Illinois

Mendon, Ill. Apr. 8th, 1856

Friend Peck

As I forgot to give you that ring before you went away I did not know but you would think I wanted to Cabbage it. I can assure you it was entirely a mistake. It was my intention to return it



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

to you before you left, but forgot it entirely. I will send it to you in this letter as I suppose it can be sent in that way.

How are you prospering by this time? I suppose you are hard at work as I am.

I left Jacksonville the same day that you did about half past one o'clock. Had a very pleasant trip home with MARY. We got home Friday night about nine o'clock. I have been at work for my brother about a week. It goes a little hard at first but I shall soon get used to it. I have been sowing oats today and harrowing them in with a pair of two year old mules which never were hitched to a harrow or plough before, and have been harnessed but a few times. I had to break them a good deal and the consequence was I did not get a great many acres of oats harrowed in.

My brother has about 80 acres of ground to put in oats and corn this spring which will keep us busy. I bought the astronomy which the class are studying and thought I would have time to study it enough to pass examination on it during the summer, but unless I find time to study more than I have done so far it will be a very poor pass if I can get through at all. When I get through work at night I am so tired that it is most impossible to study.

Please write me as soon as you receive this that I may know whether any body hooks it to get the ring, and let me know how you are getting along. Have you seen ROSS yet. Tell him if you see him that he owes me a letter. If my memory serves me right.

I have not time to write more.

Yours truly  
J. EVARTS PLATT

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Buffalo, Jun 21, 1856

Address: MRS. MILES PECK, DuQuoin, Perry Co. Ill.

Buffalo, Jun, 1856

My Dear Mrs. Peck

You doubtless have heard that our farm is not yet sold or the gentleman that talked of purchasing it is to let us know sometime in July whether he can pay for it or not. He came to Mr. RAYMONDS - said he was pleased with the place, the country - but had not sold his property - as expected & could not make the first payment - was in hopes he could arrange his business by next month so that he could purchase. Was very much pleased with his appearance & would be glad to have such a man live on our place & in DuQuoin - as I have no other idea but to return to my native place - feel very anxious to hear from you all - have not in some weeks - - you cannot guess how grandly I am situated - have every comfort & attendance.

Been two weeks here - heard from ANNA twice. She is preparing for her last days of school - then will follow me - & we shall go on further east - been riding today all over the city, have had two splendid rides. It is a beautiful city, the streets wide & clean - as to the church, Dr. CHESTERS, I am not half as interested with as with Mr. PATTERSON. They appear to be a stiff formal people - all that is thought or talk about is dress & fashion - I am astonished, how strange it seems to me, viewing it as I do. Mr. LEE is an elder in the church & he and his wife are very kind & affectionate to me in everything, but Oh! the extravagance, as I think. They have a son & daughter, 18 & 15 years of age. Very much accomplished, every advantage. MILLY the daughter is grown, young & every way so graceful - but it does seem as tho she was taught that dress & fashion was all that was required of us here upon earth & the ladies who I have met, dress is the whole absorbing topic. Oh! I hope ANNA will not get into that train of thought -----cannot flourish in such a soil.

How do you all prosper in farming. There is an awful complaint here & all around the country about pigeons taking the corn, also the cold season. Last Sunday went to church dressed as warm as anytime last winter - do write all about it - good & bad - we can make no calculation about buying us a home until our farm is sold & then I think it will be for my happiness as well as duty to find one somewhere in the vicinity of old DuQuoin.

I hope your health is better than Common. How did Mr. P. make out with his hogs in Chicago - times they say is very hard here - money scarce - wheat & corn low &c. (etc.)

I wish you could peep into my little room - everything so splendid - it seems like a dream -



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

enchantment - one of the front bedrooms - large beautiful maple trees in front, a beautiful yard - the house so large I get lost in its many entricate passages.

Their servants is not half as good as Mrs. RAYMONDSs - you are obliged to keep everything under lock & key - sometimes I forget & lock my door & Mrs. LEE brings the key to me - it all seems strange to me & I do not & cannot enjoy living this way> What bores the rich are. Mr. LEE is a banker, considered very wealthy. Next week we are all going to the falls of Niaggra - think how nice that will be - can go & return in the same day & spend some hours there. I never was there. Next month going to Bloomfield, dread the thought of leaving here. It is such a charming resting place, I sometimes forget I have no -----city & why do I expect or wish for it.

There is such a whirl of excitement-----know what I write. They live in the heart of the city, a constant roll of -----not one face that is familiar. I know the only reason I write is to hear from you, do not expect to interest you - but how much I shall be in receiving a few lines from either or any of my dear friends in DuQuoin. Don't forget to put on "Care of JOHN R. LEE Buffalo. I pray god to spare the lives & health of my friends there. I shall write to some one often. Love to all that Enquire about us. Anna's health is very good Mr. R. says - that she does not seem so to me. It may be imagination, her studies is hard. She must rest & I am going to take her all around - spend 2 or 3 dollars for her sake alone.

God save us all

(No signature)

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Post Mark: Ann Arbor, Mich, Oct. 13, 1856

Address: MR JOSEPH E. PECK, DuQuoin, Illinois

Ann Arbor, Mich, Oct 11th, 1856

Friend Joe:

You have no doubt about came to the conclusion by this time that I have wholly forgotten my promise to write to you - but you must excuse me, and I know you would did you know how busy I have been since I saw you last -- I arrived in this place on 24th Sept, was examined on the Monday & Tuesday following. Had a tough time of it if you call five hours and a half at one time, one at another, and three at another anything. I was sorely pressed you may be sure. But I survived it all. College has begun and we have just got fairly to study. It seems a little natural to me to be again subjected to the rules & regulations of college days. A student becomes so much accustomed to this systematic life that he finally comes to prefer it to any other. However I shall not regret leaving college whenever the time may come for me to do so.

I find Ann Arbor a very pleasant and beautiful town. The people seem to have energy and taste in the planning and the execution of whatever they may undertake. I think I shall pass a very pleasant winter here. We have about 250 students in the Literary department and 150 or 200 in the Medical department.

The students of the two departments, Literary & Medical do not mingle at all, each lives in a separte world of his own. I am rooming with an old classmate at McKendree, L. M. ROGERS, perhaps you recollect him.

Politics are naging him to some extent. Though they all seem to be going one way - for Freemont.

I shall expect an immediate answer to this, give me all the news, both general and particular I shall expect. If you don't I'll write to your mother and I know she will give me all that's going on.

You will excuse the brevity of this epistle and write a good long answer and I will then follow suit. I have not time now to review or rewrite so you can take this for what it is worth.

My best respects to your parents.

Yours truly  
G. W. WALL

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## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

Post Mark: Ann Arbor, Mich. Dec 31, 1857  
Address: MR. JOSEPH E. PECK, DuQuoin Ills.

Ann Arbor, Sunday, Dec. 27th, 1857

Dear Friend

Your characteristic epistle was duly secured and read with all our pleasure. I have just returned from church. Been listening to e----- of a boring sermon. I have just about come to the conclusion that none but jackasses and blockheads who could do nothing better enter the ministry. Now my good friend don't think one investment for you will know how charitable our well disposed. I am to all things of a religious nature. I have about come to another conclusion, vis - that I can improve my time better in reading religious books on the sabbath than going to church to listen to a senseless numb-skull who has neither originality or a sense of propriety in any thing discourse a long homily to a lot of sleeping church members. The methodists are going it blind on a revival here, I suppose the cussed fools need some kind of annual excitement to whip them into the straight and narrow, both which leads them to a place for which neither their -----on education in any way prepares them. Well now, scoff and by ----- I have -----ly reflected on the matter in such a manner as I thought proper.

You are enjoying christmas holidays, most of the boys have gone home. Have tolerably good times. As I am a senior I don't study a great deal. LONGFELLOW is a fine writer and unquestionably one of the first, if not the first, of American poets and if ever I said anything to the contrary I do now invoke it and stigmatize the aforesaid criticism as informed and unfortunate in every respect. If you ever heard me say anything against Mr. L. that you have treasured it up for a day of reconing was my good friend you seem to be angry yourself in your usual retirment. I don't steal chickens, don't turn back the clock, "-----ive some twenty or more" you see that I have become affected by the panic and am compelled to use your paper to answer your letter. From what you say I infer that you have not been to St. Louis. I had almost come to the conclusion that you were not going to write to me again, didn't know but that you had become religious and couldn't correspond with me. I know your nature is peculiarly suseptive to such things as I recollect that at one period of our acquaintance you seemed to be almost persuaded. Well old friend is there nothing new in Egypt or have you all stopped everything except vegetating? What do you think of politics nowadays?

Douglas and Walker have kicked out of the traces nicely - I think the little giants speech on the message is unanswerable. It appears to me that there must be a split in the democratic ranks unless some mighty hand throws oil on the troubled waters very soon. But we shall see what we shall see and I am looking for the revolution with no little interest. Nothing new here. We are all looking for the day which shall close our college days and introduce us to the stern realities of bustling life. Let it come soon as it will, as for me I am tired and sick to death of the ceaseless routine of my present mode of life. Consign this scrawl with its indicisions to the devouring flames. My respects to parents and best wishes for yourself.

Yours truly  
GEORGE W. WALL

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Cincinnati, Jan 1, 1859  
Address: MR. JOSEPH E. PECK, DuQuoin Illinois

Cinti: Jany 1st, 1859

Dear Friend

Your last epistle I filed, "Recd Dec. 18th" - You will pardon this length of time between its receipt and answer, when you consider how much better I am doing now than before. Today is New Years, of course studies are thrown aside and I can do nothing better than write to you. Albeit I have not much to say. I would like very much to grasp your hand and wish you a Happy New Year. As it is - may you have 365 pleasant days before 1860 rushes in - but what - god only knows but before that time the cold sod will weigh heavy on us both! and our annihilation complete - ah - it may be - and perhaps it would be as well - yet, while I would not shirk death - still is life dear: for when the bounding pulse heats time to the music of flushed hope, existence is direct and death seems a hateful monster come to tear us from the warm embrace of all we



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

love on earth - I have felt, at times when all nature was gloomy, my soul dark, and my heart heavy with cold, dead, disappointed feelings, that annihilation was a mild matron tenderly clasping to her bosom a wearied trusting child and the thought of oblivion forgetting all and forgotten of all, seemed a comfort so sweet that I would fain meet it as a sleeping maiden wishes to clasp her absent dreamed of lover - I know not how or why I was created but while life continues I will make the best of it and not cast it off as a wayward wanderer of the desert would throw aside a cumbrous heavy mantle - but wear it while it lasts me. What a strange thing it is too = why is it - look at mankind for the most part how degraded and unhappy! "In the street the tide of living, how it surges how it falls"

God! what base in-----able focus, God! what----- wanting souls!"

Men-----, filch, and ravage, more than they love, and aid and cherish their kind - Pile our misery to the clouds and yet our superstition tells us that for nineteen twentieths of this suffering and sinning made a torment more fearful than the soul can picture is in reserve! I will not believe so -----a code - it is an inhuman belief - If our creator gave us ignorance and cupidity, shall his injustice extend to denying us, if not happiness in the future, at last eternal oblivion? No! But you will not agree with me in this and while you say you believe it all your every action belies your tongue, and according to your -----you do more sins each hour than would take to condemn to hell a whole universe - If we live hereafter, we shall not find a gross unhappy existence - when the heart-beats no longer, and the pulse ceases, and the iron enters the soul of wife, mother, sister, friend and child, there then we shall forget, age, forget forever! But oh - my god! all the dear relations it is sad to break - yet it must be - 'Tis the hard fearful scene in life's tragic drama - It happens, every moment, while I write, it is going on - In every way of this glorious sunshine whenever it penetrates, the headman's axe glitters and the golden bowl is broken." These are gloomy thoughts for the new year, aye they are. I have written till I am unfit for communicating anything interesting, if I know it, so knowing my often infirmities, pardon my brevity and believe me.

Yours

G. W. W. (GEORGE W. WALL)

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Post Mark: Jacksonville, Ill

Address: MILES PECK, Duquoin Perry Co. Illinois

Jan 6th, 1860

Dear Parents,

I received your letter of the 2nd Jan on Friday the 7th, which is a great deal quicker than they usually come. New Years day was very pleasant, my roommate and myself went out skating. As I had never been on skates before, it took what time I was out to learn to stand up and get around on them. Prof. SANDERS being unwell, there was no exercise at the college yesterday. So we went out skating again. I learned so I could skate considerable. But all this is probably not very interesting to you. When I got back I did not feel much like writing so put it off till to day, and now write you a few lines, this evening. I have been to church and the chapel exercise to day as usual. There has been some pretty cold weather, but has turned off warm and promises rain and a general thaw out. There seems to be many complaining of hard colds, but I have not been troubled that way. You must have had a nice time indeed on Christmas day. I should think it must have been a large party. How does the barn get along, and other things in general about home? You say that Miss McCORD has been expelled from the seminary. Now I have not such curiosity generally, but I should like to hear something of the particulars of this case.

Well, as you read the papers probably more than I do, and know the news, I think I will close, hoping your next letter will come as quickly as the last.

From your son,  
J. E. PECK

\* \* \* \* \*

## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

Post Mark: DuQuoin, Ill Feb 19, 1860  
Address: JOSEPH E. PECK, Jacksonville Ill Box 272

DuQuoin April 2nd, '60

Dear Joseph

We received your last letter on Thursday and feel that you are very kind in letting us hear from you regularly, and hope you may receive this in proper time. It seems that some of the post officers are either very ignorant or very careless and I wish much might be displaced, but till then we must trust them. Your father and myself keep about as much. There is no severe sickness in the neighborhood that I know. One week from last Sabbath CHARLEY CHA--- mother was buried after a short sickness, and one week last Thursday LUELLA BURBANK and KELSO were married in the morning and started for their home in Pinckneyville. HELEN has taken a school in Mulkey town, THOMAS LIPPINCOTT is here at work, has sided up the old part of the house and is now putting a shed on the west and over the wall and cistern. I think it will be quite convenient. We have no other addition to the family concern except another Bossy and two pigs. Peach trees are now in blossom and apple trees fast putting out, wheat and grass look very green. We have had considerable rain of late which interrupted the ploughing. Your father would have written some to you last evening but for the headache and this morning is helping THOMAS and this afternoon will take the wheat up to get the money for you, 10 or 11 dollars. The price of wheat remains the same, no market except for the mills here. As to your health, I fear it may seriously injure it to confine your self so long to study. You must necessarily need a great deal of exercise to keep up your strength and my son you must exercise yourself if it is running up and down stairs. I would advise also to get a bottle of Dr. Bulls or Ayers sasaparrilla and take it according to direction. Do not read to much, it is dangerous to the mind as well as the health. Has Mrs. Fisher no wood to chop. If she has, do it by all means, it will do you good. I hope we may live and meet again in health but it depends somewhat on ourselves, whether we do or not. Also on the divine being to preserve us from ills which we cannot foresee. To his care I commend you, my son, and hope you also look to him for a blessing on your exertions. I think it will be better for you to have your room and bed by yourself in warm weather and presume will feel better. Let us hear from you as soon as convenient.

You did not tell me if you had got your picture taken, I do not wish you to be proud of it because it looks well, but put it in your trunk for your mother.

From your affectionate parents  
M. & C. PECK

\* \* \* \* \*

No envelope

Jacksonville April 6th (No year but it is probably 1860  
as it seems to relate to the previous letter of 1860)

Dear Parents

Your letter of April 2nd with the money was safely received on yesterday. I am glad to hear that you still keep well, and as for myself I am well as usual, and as usual, have nothing interesting to write to you. Spring has come with its alternate bright and showery skies and to day is one of the showery ones. I do not think that the fruit trees are quite so far along here as they are down at home, but the grass in the yards is thick and green and I can see many plowed fields from my room and from college hill. The second term and its examination are now finished and this is the end of the first week in the third. I will send you my report in this letter. The two students who boarded here have gone home, so that I am left to myself, which I am glad of on some accounts. Possibly I might feel a little more vigorous if I worked part of the time, but have got somewhat used to living without much exercise. Since I have got through sawing what wood we burned, my exercise consists in going up to the college twice a day and very often down town also. The boys have a swing fixed up to swing and jump off from, and parallel bars, all of which they dignify with the name of a gymnasium. My studies for this term are quite interesting, but have not got very far in one of them. Week, one of the peoples ----- being sick, but he will probably be back again by Monday. I have not heard from WILLARD for a long time, and if you see him, I wish you would stir him up to write to me, though I suppose he may



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

be away somewhere about. I presume that father has commenced the farming operations by this time, which if I could see them would look quite natural no doubt, but I must be content to see home in imagination only. It seems a little odd to be away from home at this time of the year, never having been away at this time before. But I may as well bring my letter to a close. If father can get the money conveniently it may be as well to send some in your next, if not, it does not matter much.

From your son  
J. E. PECK

\* \* \* \* \*

No envelope

Oct 6th, 1860

Dear Parents;

I re'cd your letter last Tuesday. The algebra has not come yet, but it will probably get here before long. I am very glad to hear that you were well there & have not lost any more stock. I thought they would stop dying when the weather changed some with Fall. As for me, I keep in usual health. To day is Saturday' and on that day I have some time not occupied in getting regular lessons. Last Saturday afternoon I went out after grapes. Mrs. FISHER's folks borrowed a horse and wagon from one of their neighbors, and two of the Miss FISHERS, my roommate and myself went out to the woods. We got either one or two gallons, I forget which, after they were picked off the stem. By the way, Mrs. F. has three daughters instead of two. One was absent teaching school when I was here last year. The weather has been tolerably pleasant so far. We have had some days of Indian summer and some rainy days. It rained hard this morning when I got up, but it has stopped now.

There are not quite so many students this year as there were last, nor as many last year as the year before. It seems that last spring the Faculty and students had a falling out. In the first place there has been a division in the New School First Presbyterian Church in this place. The seceders have built a new church for themselves. Now the President and two of the professors belong to the congregational church, but the two others professors to the Presbyterian. So that when the Pres. divided, profs WRITTING & SANDERS were warmly engaged on the side which came off from the other. The students were some for one side, some for the other, and some did not care anything about it either way. It was thought by some that the break of the students was caused by a remark which Prof. NUTTING is reported to have made -- that none but second class students attended the opposite section of the church. Which if he did make was at least very injudicious. One night five or six of the students took Prof. NUTTING's yellow horse down to the square and hired a negro to paint him like a Zebra. They left the horse tied to a post where he was found next morning. The faculty thought this an insult to the dignity of Prof. NUTTING, and having tried the students before them, they were dismissed, except such as made an apology, which I think they all did except one who has not come back at all. The students and many other persons thought the faculty to severe. Several students went to other colleges this year on this account. But it is over now, and probably will not affect the welfare of the institution after this year. I understand there (are) about one hundred and ten students this year, last year one hundred and thirty two. I do not know as I should have wrote about this if I had known it would have taken up so much room. Mother always wants me to write long letters, but I usually have nothing to write but little common place things which are not very interesting. If you were acquainted with persons and things here you would probably like to hear about them. So when I am away from home I like to hear you write what is going on in the neighborhood, and how things proceed on the farm. When you thrash out the wheat, I would like to know exactly the expense of my part, so that I can find out how much I make from the crop. If wheat brings a good price I suppose you had better sell mine, though if it is likely to be high next winter or spring you can keep a hundred bushels of it. I shall not probably need any money for three or four weeks yet. Mrs. F. would (like) to have her pay as often as once in four weeks. I Paid up yesterday what I had to spare. I had to but about six dollars worth of books which I did not expect to but this term, but it will make no difference in the end. I think I will write no more at this time. I shall expect a letter from you next week, that is I hope you will find time to write one.

## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

From your son,  
JOSEPH E. PECK.

P.S. When you write, if you think of it just add - box 272 to the address, as that is our box & the P. Off. does not always think to put the letters in unless directed to it.

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Post Mark: Jacksonville, Ill Nov --- 1860

Address: MR. MILES PECK, DuQuoin Perry Co. Illinois

Jacksonville Nov. 3rd "60

Dear Parents;

Your last letter was rec'd a day or two ago. I am truly glad to hear that you are in so good health and get along so well with your affairs. I am about as well as usual, but have been rather more busy than common for the last week, having to prepare a declaration for this morning, in addition to my other duties. The weather has been cloudy and rainy for the last few days, real gloomy Nov. weather. It is getting about cold enough to need a fire,, which we have not needed very much till lately. Wood is only two and a half per cord this year, but probably will be higher in the winter. The money which you sent came in the right time for I was almost out. If you get the wheat sold maybe you had as well send me fifteen or twenty dollars next time.

I hardly know what to write about to interest you. One day goes on the same as another, with me, with daily routine of study without any incidents whatever. I suppose that you are both very busy in carrying on the work on the farm, but I hope that you will not do too much so as to injure your health, for I do not think that at all necessary.

I knew that you will like to hear from me, so that a mote will be better than nothing.

I had almost forgotten to mention about that new handkerchief which which mother gave me before I left. I find that I have either lost it or left it at home. I think the latter is the case, but please mention if you think of it. I think I will write no more at present. Write as soon as convenient.

From your son,  
J. E. PECK

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Post Mark: DuQuoin, Ill. Nov. 13, 1860

Address: JOSEPH E. PECK, Box 272, Jacksonville, Ill.

Duquoin Nov 11th, 1860

Dear JOSEPH

We are glad you are punctual in writing and we will also endeavor to be so. What a privilege that friends, when separated, can so speedily hear from each other. We could not ~~otherwise~~ endure your absence, but we hope it the best for you and would not willing deprive you of any good. I would say to you for our sakes take good care of your self. You surely ought to have had a fire in your room long ago and do not study to hard. I should have liked to have heard your declamation. I know it was good. Well election is over. We ate dinner at Dr. WALLs, that day the Dr. was in high glee. WILLARD said but little, I suppose he had done all he could for his party. He said you had not written to him, now election is over perhaps he can get time to read your letter. There was a party the evening before at Mr. G. SMITHs. Mr. TOM LIPIN-COTT and bride MARTHA P. that was, and the Misses FAYS attended. WILLARD said he was much pleased with them. ELLENs wedding has been put off from time to time on account of their house in Missouri not being finished as ROU and DYER are in company in a mill over there. The young ladies at the seminary gave an illumination on Friday eve in honor of Mr. LINCOLN supposed to be elected President.

Miss SEEBY and one or two more did not enjoy it. she enquired your politics of me and said she could not get acquainted with you. As to your handkerchief, it is in the top of your trunk, rolled up with some other article in a paper, you must have needed it sadly. It has been cold and rainy and some snow the last week but warmer now. I expect the frame of the barn will be raised this week if the weather permits. Mr. DUNAWAY, Mr. WAGGONER and Mr. WATKINS from the station are at work on it. All your dumb friends are as usual. Jenny and Sam are great friends and she is fond of eating apple skin out of my hand. She is very pretty. Your father sends you



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

twenty dollars and you must write if it enough for the present. Did you find your things safe. You must get what clothes you need especialy the flannel wrappers. HIRAM is still confined to his bed. Mr. DUNAWAY goes there to stay nights. Miss ANNA ROOT is teaching school. MARTHA DAVID has had a fever. Miss SARAH HARVEY attends the seminary. HELEN BURBANK has been sick but I believe is better. I think I have written as much or more than will interest you. I write by candle light so you must excuse my hand writing. As to our health I am troubled some with a cough and your father is not so very well, but we have good appetites and make out to do our chores. How different from one year ago when you was so attentive and kind. Let us be grateful for all our mercies. So I must bid you good night, my dear son.

Your Mother  
CELINA PECK

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Post Mark: Jacksonville, Ill Nov 18, 1860  
Address: MILES PECK, Duquoin Perry Co. Ill

Jacksonville Nov 17 '60

Dear Parents;

Your letter of the 11 inst. has been received in safety. It had a good deal of news in it, some of which rather surprised me. I did not think T. LIPPINCOTT was going to get married so soon. I like such a long letter as you wrote, giving the news items.

We have not had any snow at all here as yet. You need not think I went without a fire when I needed it, for we had had one several times when I wrote last. Since I wrote we have had one week of real cold winter weather, but the last week has been warm and pleasant as the Indian summer days. But this morning rose cool and cloudy and looks now some like snow. We have purchased our wood for the winter - two cords.

To day is Saturday as is usual when I write to you. On that day I generally have good part of the day to myself, that is do not have to get lessons. We have to be at the college an hour or two with morning. There seems to have been considerable sickness in the neighborhood, by the way you write. Some of them have had quite a long seige. I was sorry to hear that you were again troubled with a cough, and that father was not very well. I hope that you will both be as well and strong as ever before the winter is gone. As for myself, I am as well as usual. I found my pocket handkerchief soon after I wrote, but it mystified me somewhat for a while. If you have the money ready you may send me ten dollars in your next, which will (be) as much as I shall need this term.

If father gets time I would like for him to write a part of the next letter. I would like to hear about the farm affairs, the barn, wheat market etc.

From your son,  
JOSEPH E. PECK

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Post Mark: Jacksonville, Ill Dec. 2, 1860  
Address: Mr. MILES PECK, DuQuoin, Perry Co. Ill.

Jacksonville Dec. 1st, 1860

Dear Parents;

Your letter of the 26th came safely to hand yesterday. I am very glad to hear that you are in usual health. I am as well as usual. Thanksgiving day has come and passed off in safety to all of us who live at Mrs. P's, but I fear not quite so pleasantly to the turkeys. We had nothing very unusual going on except that we had an extra fine dinner.

College exercises were suspended on Thanksgiving day, and there were sermons at the different churches in town. It was quite a vacation and gave me a fine chance to do some reading. It will be only three weeks till this term will close, and some of the boys are counting the days very anxiously. We are already reviewing in some of our studies. About ten days ago there was a great jubilee at Springfield to celebrate LINCOLN's election. Some of the students went out. I did not go, but suppose it was a grand time.

I get the Chicago Press & Tribune to look at once in a while. By that it seems that there is a good deal of excitement at the south and much bluster about secession. From what I can make

## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

out of it there seems to be only two or three states who are very desirous for it. But if after Lincoln gets into office he should not let them off. I do not see what they can do. For it is hardly possible for them to resist the whole North seccessfully. But I rather think that it will all pass off without any serious results. But I should not be surprised if there was a tremendous war in Europe next spring. If there is, according to the theory of a great many, it will raise the price of American productions.

I do not see why it should take five or six days for your letters to get here. I should think they would come in about two. There is a young man here by the name of BRUSH from Jackson County. I have not got acquainted with him yet. Maybe you know his folks. I think I have heard of others speak of such a family. If it will not be convenient to send any money in your next letter, it does not matter for I have sufficient, possibly some more, for this term.

From your son  
J. E. PECK

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Post Mark: Duquoin, Ill. Dec 10, 1860  
Address: JOSEPH E. PECK, Jacksonville, Illinois

DuQuoin Dec 10th, 1860

Dear JOSEPH;

We received your letter last Tuesday but I have been busy since, to day is cloudy and windy and I have no work hands. The barn is up and partly enclosed. It stands just west of the cow yard and berry pen. The horse stable opens into the cow yard and the cattle stable into berry pen. The roof runs east and west, the barn floor also, so you can think now it looks. The weather has been unfavorable for work which causes slow progress. The corn is nearly all gathered, have hired most of it done - other things as usual. Miss HOGE, that was sick, is dead and buried. HIRAM is about there is a Mrs. KELLY sick now. The ladies at the Sem. (Seminary) had a Party thanksgiving eve to which all were invited, and having a contrabution, took up about 23 dollars. The last term of the school found Mrs. PECK lacking her time and board. There is fewer scholars this term. SARAH attends the district school. I was mistaken as to her politics. She is for LINCOLN and allowed her half of the window to be illuminated. There has been no more weddings. Your father and myself are invited to Mrs. ROOTS on Christmas, whether there is anything to come of it I do not know and you need not care as there are many bright stars arising which eclipse all others, whatever is, I trust will be for the best. I hope for the honor of the nation there may be a reconciliation of the states, at least if the(y) separate it may (be) done peacably. I trust it will be over ruled for good at least.

How do your shirts and socks hold out and have you got those warm wrappers. You must clothe yourself warm and make full use of your overcoat. We have not killed the hogs yet but killed the fatted calf when it was about eight months old. The quarters weighed 282 and the hide 37 and 91 lbs of dried tallow. Your father is waiting for this so I must close, good bye.

Your affectionate mother  
C. PECK

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Post Mark: Jacksonville, Ill Dec. 26, 1860  
Address: Mr. MILES PECK, DuQuoin Perry Co. Illinois

Dec. 26th, 1860

Dear Parents;

I received a letter from you yesterday, dated the 20th. The one which you wrote before that, I also received nearly a week ago, some nine days after it was written. I answered it on the 20th, which you will probably get before you receive this one. I shall very likely wait till I get an answer from this before I write again, so as to get our correspondence regular as it was.

We are having real winter weather now, plenty of snow and good sleighing, but that does not profit me any. Our vacation commenced last Friday noon and extends to next Wednesday Jan 2nd. Many of the students have gone home. My roommate and myself pass the time in reading and resting generally. The examinations were finished last Friday, about which there is nothing particular to be said, except that I got through as well as the majority of my classmates.



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

Yesterday of course was Christmas. Mrs. F. had a very good dinner and great deal of company to eat it. I hope that you have had a happy Christmas, as I presume you have. Mother seems to be in one of her spells of feeling remarkably poor in respect to money matters. I suppose it is a rather difficult time to dispose of things. But I really hope you won't send me that dried apple money to get my picture taken. For I shall probably get it taken myself some time during the year, if I shall have a spell of feeling better looking than common.

As far as concerns myself it will not be necessary to sell any more wheat just at present. My board for this term is paid except 3 or 4 dollars. I shall have 11 dollars tuition to pay at the beginning of next term. I have 18 dollars on hand now, and if you can send me some more in your next, I can make out for a few weeks. You do not state what the price of wheat is. On my own account I should not like to sell any for less than 1 dollar or 90 cents at the least. But as you know, I am owing you considerable, and if you can not get money other ways to pay what you owe, are paying interest, would rather you should take enough of my wheat to pay what I owe you, as I do not wish to keep it under those circumstances. If wheat is down I see no reason why it should rise before spring.

Please write soon.

From your son  
J. E. PECK

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Duquoin, Ill. Jan 2 1861

Address: JOSEPH E. PECK, Box 272, Jacksonville, Ills.

Dear JOSEPH

We received your last letter with one from the ----- on Saturday. They might have been in the office on Friday, it was rainy and we did not go there. We spent Christmas day at Mrs. ROOTS with quite a number of our old neighbors. The Mr. SMITH's and families, SPRAGES and families, Mr. POST and Miss HELEN POST, Mrs. SKINNER and most of her family, Mr. HIZER and family, Mr. and Mrs. LIPPINCOTT, Mr. HIRAM HINCKLY and BURGERS' family were invited but were not there, likewise Dr. WALL's and HORACE SMITH but their ladies were not well so of course not there. Well for dinner we had turkey-chicken pie, three other kinds of pie, two kinds of cake, potatoes, turnips, pickles, canned peaches, bread, butter, cheese and coffee, all very good and fine, and ANNA's rosy cheeks to look at, which I suppose to some young gentleman would have excelled the whole. Miss HELEN POST enquired about you, spoke of the time you first went to Jacksonville, etc. Mr. POST waited on her there, perhaps something may come of it but you won't care. Well as to the report, general deportment, good; attention to study, diligent; proficiency in study, between 8 and 9; examination, 8 and 5. Mrs. PECK looked at it and pronounced it very good. The seminary is quite small. Miss McCORD, Mrs. HATCH's neice has been expelled and is now teaching McCLURE's girls at home. wheat is one dollar per bushel now. Your father will take some away directly, he has to work at the barn just now so they can lay the floor.

I suppose the young Mr. BRUSH you spoke of is son of Mr. B. at Carbondale, the man who owned Fanny, the little mare we sold to Mr. BEAD. Many are complaining with bad colds here. I hope you will be careful and wear your overcoat when you go out. You will find ~~No~~ money in this, not even the dried apple money. We have had to pay out all we then had and perhaps you can wait till next time. We have to pay MURRELL soon and shall be selling wheat and will remember you. No, my son, we never forget you. This is New Years day a beautiful day it is. May the coming year be as beautiful in a moral point of view. May the dark clouds with which our political horizon is over (cast?) disappear before the peaceful rays of the sun of righteousness as dew before a summer sun. We are preparing to go to the station this afternoon and will take this letter there, perhaps you will get it sooner. I hope you will get your picture taken, you have no reason to complain of your looks, we should want it to look like you of course. I have no more time to write, so good bye, my very good boy.

Your affectionate mother  
CELINA PECK

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## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

Post Mark: DuQuoin, Ill Jan 15, 1861  
Address: JOSEPH E. PECK, Box 272, Jacksonville, Ill

Sabbath Ev. Jan 13, 1861

Dear JOSEPH

We received your letter a few days since and I write now that you may receive it in tome to write on Saturday as I begin to feel answering in a week after hearing from you. Your father sends you ten dollars. It is a general complaint of severe colds and many about sick. We all have to take physic or fever would follow. I have more fears for you on account of your reluctance to take any thing. I had it bad one week ago and not entirely well yet. I had fever nights and a violent cough. I took physic and broke up the fever after that I took once or twice a day equal parts of sulphur and ginger in molasses which with liquorice has kept it loose. These you can procure and take if you should need. It is very pleasant to be able to skate but the ice is also a fine place to take cold and now when this influenza is about I wish you would be very careful. We want to see you very much. Four months has passed from the vine and then I hope we may meet in health. Miss McCORD violated all the rules of the school as I understand and what else I do not know. I expect we shall butcher this week, pork is ----- per cwt, we have not much to sell. Your father sold some wheat yesterday for \$1.50 and before for \$1. Wheat is rising in price and he will not sell any more at present except what you want, you must write how much and when you want it.

He has settled with MURRELL by paying him except forty dollars which was due WILLIAM MURRELL and Mr. PAGE having money due him at the cost paid him. WILLIAM then and Mr. PAGE wait a while on us. The barn is almost done I believe. TRUMAN burst his boiler last week and they will have to wait for some lumber a while, but the horses stable will be so that it can be used soon. I think John and Mary (horses) will highly prise their clean room. We have attended meeting to day, it was communion. Mr. LIPPINCOTT spoke well as he always does. I intend to invite them here next week with some others. You recollect it next week on Wednesday will be your birthday. If you are well and we are well you may think of us eating Chicken pie and other good things on that day. You can partake with us in imagination but we should prefer the reality. Then I should know you were well. I enjoy doing something for our neighbors who did so much for us last winter, and I more enjoy helping ourselves and not to trouble our good neighbors.

If you are sick don't neglect to call the best physician and do it at once. I have full confidence in you in every other respect. We were gratified to receive so good a report of you but we expected nothing else. WILLARD received a letter from you Saturday. Your father saw him yesterday, as to the political news it is rather exciting but I think it will come out right. I could send you a paper but I fear it would injure your indigestion to read all the doings. Good night, my son.

From your mother C. P.

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Post Mark: Jacksonville, Ill  
Address: MILES PECK, DuQuoin, Perry Co, Ill.  
My Dear Parents,

I received your last letter on Thursday, which was much sooner than usual. I really have not much to write, things go on with me much as they usually do. I am about as well as common and have not had a bad cold as yet. Neither have I been skating again, for the weather has been to warm a week or two back for ice, but it has turned colder again now, with a light snow. I am sorry that you are unwell so much but hope it will not last long. You do not say whether father is well of not, so I infer that he is. I should like for him to write me a letter or part of letter himself, if he can find the time. If you have not the money ready it will not be necessary to send any next time. It is lucky for me that wheat is rising; and I hope that it will keep rising for a while. I do not know whether the secession movement has any effect upon the market or not.

We buy a newspaper occasionally, but I can not make much out of the South but threats. If they really do secede I think something of a war must ensue, at least enough to bring them back



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

to their allegiance.

I will mail you a catalogue of the college with this letter.

From your son  
J. E. PECK

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Post Mark: DuQuoin, Ill Jan 29 1861

Address: JOSEPH E. PECK, Jacksonville, Ill Box 272

DuQuoin 27th Jany '61

Dear Son

You last came duely to hand by which learn your health is good as usual, we have our health this winter as well as could be expected. I think I have gained strenth some since you left home, our barn builders have got through and left. I think we have a nice barn and the horses appear to enjoy it. Have not yet had the cows in but it is all ready for them. We celebrated your birthday by giving an entertainment to -----, W. LIPPINCOTT and wife, Rev. W. WOOD and wife, Seminary teachers & had an agreeable time of it. W. LIPPINCOTT sends thanks for the catalogue and wishes for your welfare and prosperity. I cannot interest you with news but will just say that our political horizon is dark and gloomy. How it may terminate is hard to tell. If the present administration had done its duty the revolution would have been queld before this time, as I think. But I will not speculate further upon it but leave it for time to determin, probably will be over ruled for the best and maybe for the freedom of those held in bondage. I do not feel much like writing as usual and will leave room for your mother to write. M. PECK

It is expected that HIRAN BURBANK is to marry Miss LEELY this week and it is understood that Mr. DUNAWAY and Miss SARAH HARVEY are engaged, he has bargained for Mrs. JOHNSONs place.

I will try to fill out your fathers letter for I see he has not told you much of our affairs which I feel it is your right to know. We are really over ears in debt, over two hundred dollars to Mr. WAGGONER for the work done to barn and granery and thrashing at ten percent interest, one hundred sixty to the timber man who is constantly clamoring for his pay. Together with our doctor bill, our last years stove bill, the forty to Mr. PAGE and some to Mr. McHENRY and soon our taxes, is enough to make your mother feel poor and the coming hard times will make every thing that we have to sell low. I am in hopes Mr. WAGGONER will take some of our horses and stock but we shall pay interest till they probably will be a small price. He offered to take wheat for thrashing at the market price which would have been better than to pay ten per cent. But your father does not appear to feel troubled and you know I need not, so long as he has probably enough to pay it. My dependence will be on you and I hope you may be able to keep out of debt, and according to the good book "owe no man anything but love and good will." Do not do with out what you need, it will not help us any. Good bye my son

Your mother C. P.

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Post Mark: Illegible

Address: Mr. MILES PECK, DuQuoin, Perry Co. Illinois

Jacksonville Feb 13 th 1861

Dear Parents,

Your last letter has come safely to hand. I was sorry to hear that mother was unwell, but hope that she is well as usual by this time. I have not been very well myself for some days back, but feel some better now. I have not missed my recitations on that account and do not apprehend anything serious. I really have not much to write about. LINCOLN started for Washington last Monday morning, and his speech at Sterling all the other doings, form quite a topic for conversation in this place. A week ago last Monday evening I had the pleasure of hearing one of the bug men of the nation give a lecture, Mr. HORACE GREELY. His subject was not political but was about self made man. It did not give much satisfaction among the students. I did not think it amounted to much. What paper was that which you was going to send? I can get all sorts of papers here in town. But I suppose it was something particular which you wished me to see.



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

Perhaps you can tell me in your next. It seems that some of the states consider themselves as out of the Union, and have chosen JEFF DAVIS for a President. I would like for you to send me my Playfair's Euclid in the course of a week or two if you can without much trouble. I suppose they did not use that Geometry or I should have brought it with me. I shall have to look it over some, for there will be a written examination on all the studies of the year at the end of the year. Please write soon and tell me the news if there is any.

J. E. PECK

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Post Mark: Jacksonville, Ill Feb. 24, 1861

Address: Mr. MILES PECK, DuQuoin, Perry Co. Illinois

Jacksonville Feb. 23rd, '61

Dear Parents;

I received your last letter yesterday, and first I hope you will excuse me for sending this scrap, for it is all I have got, & my roommate is not here so that I could borrow. I like to get such a long letter from you as the last. I also received the paper you sent me yesterday. I am glad to hear that you are in usual health. As for me I am as well as usual. You suggest some particulars by which I may lengthen my letters. As to my room, it does tolerable well but is not so large as I would like. It has a carpet on the floor, of the rag order of architecture, the same is upstairs, with a window looking out to the south. My roommate is a pleasant youth of nineteen, studying in the preparatory department. He lives at Woodlawn, which is near Alton. As to the family, Mrs. F. Seems a pleasant lady of fifty, but I think she can scold if she tried to. The eldest daughter is a young lady of 25 or 30 I should judge, about whom I can say nothing but that she teaches school sometimes. The next younger is the wit and life of the family & of the table in general. As to the personal apperance of these three, they have all black hair and yes, somewhat dark, if I might speak so of ladies, in complexion. The youngest is somewhat full of fun also, has brown hair, light complexion. There, I think you will have enough of description. I should like very much to live at home & surely anticipate such pleasure in doing so sometime, but since I thought it would be for my advantage to go to college, I, of course, wish to go long enough to answer my purposes. And if I go another year it is particularly necessary for me to go this year through. Please write soon, yours truly.

J. PECK

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Post Mark: Jacksonville, Ill April 21, 1861

Address: Mr. MILES PECK, DuQuoin, Perry Co. Illinois

Jacksonville, April 19, 1861

Dear Parents,

I received your last letter yesterday. Was sorry to hear that mother had been sick. Hope that (she) has entirely recovered by this time. I am well as usual, except I have been troubled with a headache some to day. It has been very pleasant weather for the last few days and propitious to the farmers. Since the war has begun there is hardly anything (else) talked about here. We can hear the news very quick, telegraph dispatches from Charleston to Washington, from there to Springfield where it is printed in the Journal, so we get news from Charleston the next day after it occurred. I suppose you have heard that Fort Sumpter has been taken by the secessionists and the government troops forced to retire. Fort Pickens will probably soon be attacked. It is thought that Washington will be attacked by the secessionists. If Kentucky & Missouri secede, there may be war in our own state. The affair seems to be getting serious, but it may terminate somewhere without much fighting. But the traitors should be brought to come terms, for they have opposed themselves to the government of the United States, seized upon its property, & Committed many other unpardonable offences. It has been found necessary to raise volunteers for the support of the government. They have been raising a company here this week. I think that eight of the students have joined & two or three more seem about to. And I think that many more of them will join if they think they are really needed & if more companies are raised. I for one would as soon go as not. But do not be alarmed about it at present, probably I shall not join before I hear from you. This company will go to Springfield on Monday morning. I hope you will write soon and let me know the state of affairs in Egypt. (Southern Illinois) It has been rumored that Egypt



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

will secede, but I regard that as a scandal. Let me know whether they are raising any volunteers & if so, if any of our acquaintances are going &c, &c.

From your son J. E. PECK

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Post Mark: DuQuoin, Ill Jun 3 1861

Address: JOSEPH E. PECK, Paducah, Ky, the care of Capt. Loomis, 6th Ill. Cavalry  
DuQuoin June 2nd 1861

Dear JOSEPH

We received your last letter last Friday but have delayed writing hoping to have some news. I wrote a few lines to Mrs. FISHER enclosing five dollars but have not heard from her. Your father settled with WILLARD, the interest was thirty cents. As to the rest they ought to be settled but do not know that they are. Well, Mrs. CAMPBELL has just called and says Richmond and Corinth are both evacuated, the latter into three small armies and the former we have not heard the particulars. WILLARD WALL was married last Thursday eve to Miss NETTLETON. They started for Chicago the next morning. I suppose you have not lost a friend but gained another. We were sorry to hear of your being sick, hope you have got well again. You must be careful to not set on the ground. A great many soldiers are sick with a diarea, don't you think so much coffee is partly the cause. It is so stimulating to the nervous system that it causes the bowels to become too active. I heard a lady say that she had been afflicted with a diarea for years ignorant of the cause till this last winter they had used tea instead of coffee and was entirely cured. I wish you could exchange your coffee for tea. I thought of sending some. I hope you have got the box but the apples and eggs, if not the butter, may be spoiled. The butter if old will do to make toast or season things with. If you had received it sooner I should have given it the credit of your sickness. I am afraid you may some of you get poisoned.

If you know the people to be friendly you can trust them but of strangers be very cautious.

This evening there will be a concert of music at the station (present day Du Quoin) by the celebrated Baker family. I shall not go but will send this letter along. I wish you could come home but then if you should have to go back again what comfort in it. I wish this hateful war was over and you could all come home for good. What great rejoicing peace would cause to those whose friends return in safety. But to many their joy would be mingled with sorrow. At noon your father went to Reed to know if your things had come but they had not that he knew of. It will be some satisfaction to see the clothes you have lately worn. I hope you will take good care of yourself and Thomas and not break your necks and bones needlessly.

How many are in your mess. We had a fine rain Saturday afternoon and your father went out to your strawberry patch but some one had been there before him. I picked a few in the meadow wondering whether you would get any this year. Your wheat and grass are good in spots but some of it is lodged by the rain.

I think we will have a mess of peas soon and wish they might be seasoned with your presence. I hope we are thankful for the comforts and comfortable health which we enjoy. we sent you two papers by mail a while since and will send you another when I go to the station. Your father has sold all the calves but one and one year old. I shall have considerable milk and will send you a cheese the next chance. Write soon.

Except (Accept) our love from your mother C. PECK

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Post Mark: DuQuoin, Ill Dec. 26, 1861

Address: Mr. JOSEPH E. PECK, Care Capt. Loomis 6 Cav. Regt. Shawneetown, Ill.  
DuQuoin Ill Dec. 25th 1861

Ancient Farmer

I lately read a letter from you full of pleasant, though somewhat saddening memories, and was forcibly reminded of those peculiar traits in your character that I formerly was so familiar with - I am this evening at my leisure and as I have never been prompt in answering your friendly epistles I will this writing attempt to make some feeble effort to assure you that I am not yet inexcusable to the -----of "auld lang syne"- This is christmas, the anniversary of the birth of him whose character is the model of all virtue, so full of all the graces that adorn and beautify

## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

the nature of humanity that his name has become the synonyme of all goodness, gentleness and plenty - If there is anything in the bible that is peculiarly calculated to attract the sinner and respect of the --oder it is the -----ty and beauty of Christs character and no man however sceptical he may be as to the general doctrines inculcated by the churches can fail to honor and love the divine loveliness that flows forth in every action and word of the "Sinless one" - But while the day is anniversary of his birth and has become a holiday throughout all christendom, we scarcely ever see the day properly celebrated but always desicrated - you, knowing my general views with reference to religious subjects, may feel some surprise at the tenor of these pages - yet I am sure no man has greater respect for those principles of honor, virtue, truth and purity that aught to form and control every action that I have and while I cannot yield assent to the dogmas of the church I am bound to acknowledge the grand doctrines of eternal principles which underlie and form the basis of a truly noble and honorable life - I have perhaps had more opportunities of observing the follies and vices of men than you have, and I am every day becoming more and more convinced that human nature is as far from being originally pure, as light is from darkness. And that the old maxim that regards any man as honest until shown to be otherwise should be reversed to be correct - and the more I become convinced of this proposition, the more I love and respect the truly favorable and truthful character.

Since you left here I think nothing of special mention has ocured. I have been busy and constantly engaged and have found but little time to write to or think of about friends.

The war excitement as a matter of course envelops everything else and we are now considering the chance of a brush with England - Should this come and the world must soon become involved in war - and God only can tell when peace will again dawn on this unhappy country - but we must not shrink from taking the right ground whatever it may be - If we cannot avoid collision with England except by making humiliating and ----- concessions, let us have war - yet I hope the difficulty can be removed by skillful diplomacy and that all will eventually turn out right - I have nothing in the way of local items that would interest you and shall not attempt to detail anything of the kind - Excuse my brief and imperfect letter and believe me

very truly yours GEO. W. WALL

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Post Mark: DuQuoin, Ill. Mar 24, 1862

Address: Mr. JOSEPH E. PECK, Co. I, sixth Ill Cav. Reg. Baton Rouge, La. Smithland Ky.

On back of envelope--Received at Cairo, Ill Jun 3

DuQuoin March 22nd 1862/3

Dear JOSEPH

We received your last letter day before yesterday. We were glad to hear of your safe arrival at Smithland but sorry that you were sick. I wish you was at home but it is likely best for you to remain quiet. I feel anxious about you fearing your recent exposure and excitement together with the mumps may cause you to be seriously ill. we sent you two papers last week which will help to occupy your attention but don't neglect your health. Are you in a hospital or exposed to the damp and rainy weather which we have had lately. It is a cold raw day, cloudy with the wind in the north. Mr. DUNAWAY is sick, your father has now gone to see him. we received this weeks papers with news of victory from every quarter and considerable loss. New Madrid was taken with about fifty killed and wounded. The enemy retreated in the night in a hard thunder shower leaving a million of property. I will send you the herald soon, it has the most important news in it. I do not think the bill to reduce the cavalry has become a law yet, in the last paper some one proposed to take it up but there were objections and likely it still lies on the senate table. I was very much in hopes you would all be disbanded. I hope you may not be called in to action but whereever you are I expect you will do your duty trusting in God to keep you safely. I hope the war may soon cease and you may all return in safety. You have done some important service in preventing a rebel regiment from being formed which is better than to have fought them and been half killed and wounded in scattering them and taking their Col. prisoner, but what of those who were released. Will they not revenge themselves on the unionist. Or be skulking about to shoot you when on guard. I hope not but they are desperate at being so often defeated, you must look out sharp for then. Should you come home on furlough get some one to take care of John (a



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

horse) and come on the boats and cars, do not on any account risk coming the direct route. We are in usual health. Merry has a fine colt and you can send or bring a name for her if you choose. Miss PECK's school flourishes, her sister is with her and they manage the boarding department now. Mr. ZIBA WOOD is to occupy Mr. WEEKS house this summer and a Dr. SMITH lives on the HENDERSON place. He has two daughters to send to the Seminary. I have not heard of any weddings this winter, of course there are no young men to marry, but many who will be mourned for. All the news is war news. The convention is still setting and I think will hatch a snail which will cost the State pretty amount. Do you hear from WILLARD? He sent us papers a while but I think has got tired of it. If you have not received your pay you could get a pass from the Capt. I suppose or he may be coming up and permit you to bear him company but do not come down on foot through the mud and water but manage to get a ride or stay somewhere till we can send for you. If you send home your money I will lock it safely in your trunk if you wish till you return. Your wheat looks quite green and the grass round the yard, but the ground is full of water and not as much like spring as two weeks ago. But it is warmer where you are I hope. You must be very careful to have your clothes well dried and aired by the fire. I do not see how you can get them dry enough to put on in your little tents, should you come home bring all your clothes that a may wash and mend them up. I have not been to the station yet and have done nothing about socks so you must get what you can of the commissary and I can fix them for you. We wish you to write and let us know how you are as soon as you get this as we shall feel anxious about you. Our love to you and respects to Thomas and the rest whom we know.

From your affectionate Parents M. (&) C. PECK

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Post Mark: Memphis, Tenn. Dec. 26 (1863?)  
Address: Mr. MILES PECK, Du Quoin Perry Co. Ill.

Memphis Dec. 24th

My Dear Parents:

I received your welcome letter of the 16th today. The box arrived two or three days ago. You may be assured that if I was surprised at its coming, I was even more rejoiced when I came to examine its contents. The chicken pie was excellent and we did not have to eat it cold as mother prophesied. For our cook, Toby Tubby, alias DRAYDON DAVIS, warmed it over in the skillet. Also the mince pies, which were splendid, were served the same way. The butter is very good, and the piece of cheese you put in just suits my taste, which you know is hard to suit in that article. We have not entirely consumed the box yet but the chicken and mince are gone. The socks came in good time as I was nearly out. They will last me through the winter. You must accept my thanks for the box, and I will consider it my christmas present. Well it is christmas eve and you will probably celebrate the day by a good dinner either at home or abroad. I expect it will pass among us soldiers much as other days pass. It has been a pleasant day to day but there has been much cold and rainy weather within the last month.

We have been pretty busy since coming back to Memphis. With scouting and all kinds of guard standing we are on duty nearly every day.

Gen. Grierson with a large force of cavalry and mounted infantry, including the 6th at Germantown has gone up towards KY. in pursuit of Forrest who is somewhere in Tenn. with a large force.

There does not seem to be much war news since the last battle of Chickamauga. With the army of the east all seems to be quiet along the Rapidan and Potomac as usual. I suppose however the war is making some progress if it is only in starving out the rebels.

I suppose time has made great changes in the population and the appearance of things around Duquoin. I wonder if my old friends, supposing I ever had any there, have forgotten all about me for I get no letters except from you. I really ought to write to WILLARD and see if I can not draw from him what he really thinks in regard to politics.

Well, perhaps by next Christmas I may see you and the rest in person. In the meantime,

## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

anticipating the morrow morning, I will wish you a happy Christmas.

From your son.  
J. E. PECK

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Post Mark: Waverly, Ill. Jan 23, 1864

Address: MILES PECK, Esq. DuQuoin, Perry Co., Ill.

Waverly, Jan 21st, 1864

Mrs. CELINA PECK

Dear madam, I received your letter in due time acknowledging the receipt of the spoons and regreted very much that the number was minus one, on the very day I received your letter for the first time I learned one of the spoons was left. How it happened no one could tell. Thanksgiving our folks used a good many spoons. Huldah had some rolled in paper just as yours was and I suppose some one took one from that paper not knowing they were there. It will be kept safe for you until you can get it. If you think best I will send it in a letter, I shall wait to hear from you. Your letter was read with much interest by all the family. The poetry was admired by many, it spoke the sentiments of many here. I have nothing of interest to write, all well, very little sickness among us at present.

We have just heard of the death of two more of the boys of Company G. of the 101st, one was killed, the other sickened and died. I don't remember whether I mentioned to you the death of FRANK HUMPHREY, he was CAROLINE STARR son, he was killed on the Ram Frocher-tand in June. You spoke of M. CARTERs family. He has been sick a long time this fall with typhoid fever, is better now. ADANINAM is in college, his health is tolerable. Ever since Christmas we have had very cold weather, I think we have never had so long and so cold a spell, certainly for 26 years. We have snow enough to make good sleighing but it is all piled by the fences.

We have in Waverly more than twenty war widows which make a constant draught for something to eat or some thing to wear or wood or some thing else.

Accept this from your friend.

HOMER CURTISS

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Post Mark: DuQuoin, Ill. Feb. 12, '64

Address: Mr. JOSEPH E. PECK, Care of Capt. Skinner, Company I, Sixth Ill Cavalry, German-town, Tenn.

Duquoin Feb. 11th, 1864

Dear JOSEPH

We have two letters from you since we wrote, last one dated the 29th Jan., the other Feb. 4th. We were sorry you were not in good health to start on such an important expedition but we can only trust you in the hands of Him who notices every sparrow that falls to the ground. He can so order things as to bring good out of it to all. I hope you may all return to your homes in a few months to rest. There will be no necessity for you to re-enlist as the quota of the state is more than filled now. We shall need you to help elect state officers. What will become of Ill. if left to the mercy of the copperheads. They will all be still in the grass till the time comes when they will hope to get the control of the state offices when they can call you home.

I am glad you have a Col. that suits, as the regiment through its officers have presented him with a sword. I hope you will do a great good to the country with no harm to yourselves. We have warm pleasant weather and I hope it may be tempered according to the necessities of our soldiers who live without shelter.

We received the valice you sent. Perhaps I will send it back to you sometime.

I hope you will not suffer for the want of food, always keep money enough by you for an extremity. The boys have some of them sent home money but we have received none from you.

We hear that the same soldiers will beg borrow or even steal from the others that they may have it to spend. I hope you may not be duped by either of this class. As to those who have wives here, they have supported them well thus far and it is often remarked that no women in the



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

community live so at their ease and have money to travel and buy all they imagine they need as the wives of the soldiers. Some of them undoubtedly deprive themselves of many little comforts to do it and when their three years of hard service expires will come home poorer than they went. One Love has done justice to her soldier, she has supported herself and child and bought and paid for a little home that her husband should also enjoy the benefit of his----- and she is respected for it and whatever befalls JIM CLERK, the community will not let his wife suffer, nor I hope any other one. They will be provided for, Gov. YATES says they shall be.

I suppose you have heard of the awful tragedy at the station. It is hoped that the soldier may recover, but the scene was dreadful and the excitement ran high. I hope nothing of the kind will again occur. I have no news in particular and it is doubtful whether this reaches you.

We may have a wedding in the neighborhood by and by. MILFORD has moved all his goods to the station and the mail is left at Mr. WATTS. Col. CAMEL (s) family are to exchange places with MILFORD and MARTIN will go on to his farm when he gets a house keeper. LEONARD has a wooden leg and OREN is now at Vicksburg. GIB CLARK has gone to Springfield and DAN THILLKILL with him, we have not yet seen GIB. McKINEYS and WILLIAM MURRILL started for the east on Tuesday. WILLIAM is going east to enlist where he will or expects to get a large bounty.

All honor to the boys who were willing to go bounty or no bounty, I say. Many who went to Springfield to enlist for the bounty deserted before they arrived at Cairo. Shame on such men and boys.

Little ABE is very musical and is much company for me. We lost a part of our apples that cold weather, do you get any apples?

As a nation we are passing through deep trouble but I hope we shall all that live through it, be made better and wiser and those who die upon the altar of their country may be received to heaven through Him, who gave his life a sacrifice for us.

You must not get melancholy, but if you do, read the fortieth psalm and bring your mind to feel the same. It is by reading and thinking of the goodness and kind care of a providence over us, that we feel at ease. His promises never fail. His power is infinite to bring to pass his pleasure. And what are we but his creatures whose happiness consists in performing our duty which is his will.

Mrs. ROOT and Mrs. RAYMOND made us a visit. I Liked Mrs. R. very much, she has now gone home; ANNA is about as usual some days better, other days not so well. She sits up most of the day and says perhaps she shall be better when the warm comes, I hope she may! Write often as you can, we shall watch the papers for any news from you with much anxiety. We are in usual health, accept our love and best wishes.

Your mother CELINA PECK

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Lawrence, Kans. Feb 20, 1864

Address: CELINA PECK, Duquoin Perry Co. Ill

Coole brick vineyard, Feb 19th, 1864

My moste respected friend

I now take my pen to write you again to thank you for your kind letter. I can get more news from one of your letters than from some others and hope you will remember me as often as convenient as I am for fond of hearing from my old neighbor and friend. We are all at the present time enjoying good health and have ever since we came here. We have moved from where we lived and now live on what I call Mount Plesent. I will discribe the place and you will agree with me I think. We live on quite a high hill, full as high as the Sem. Hill, a gradual decent each way with low rich valleys on all sides. On this hill is situated the little house we live in. On the east side is grapevines, on the north is fruit trees of all kinds, mixed with shade and flower trees. On the west side is some pare trees, ever greens shrubbrey, intermingle (d) with all kinds of flower and roses of all kinds. Flowers that bloom in March and with these is very long bower house of early grapes of the most delisious kind. What comfort, I should take, could you step over some evening this summer and enjoy a walk over mount plesent as I call it, but the distance is to great between us to expect such a rich treat, but distance can not detain our thoughts. We can think of

## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

each other and bestow our prayers and best wishes on each other and when time shall cease with us here on earth, may we meet in a more perfect mount plesent than earth can aford. Mrs. PECK, you think you shall stay in Ill, well I could not advise you to come out here, you have everything to make you happy and comfortable that earth can aford but good health and perhaps a journey to Kansas would add to your health and your happiness. I hope when the war is over you will indulge yourselfs a little and come out and make us a visit in a very few miles of us. I forgot to discribe the south side of our hill. Well, the mane road from Lawrence to Neola run by the south side where the stage coach passes every day beside a grate deal of travel, south side of the road is acres of trees in a nursery. Mr. B?NRES has about 80 acres in a vineyard and nursery, he will dispose of nearly 1000 dollars worth of trees and vines and other things this spring then if his grapes does well as usual he will sell from 1000 to 19 hundred dollars worth of grapes and fruit that pays well. Mr. WOOD will work for him this year, he will learn a good deal now to tend grapes and take next year ourself. You say deaths are not infrequent. I should think so by the number you gave me, poor HIRAM, he is unfortunate indeed but Death is certain to all and happy is the one that is ready to meet it, you think. Marriages are out of the question, quite to the reverse here, tis nothing to hear quite often of a marriage but very few deaths have we any knollage of, with the exception of the Lawrence rade (raid) when the bush whackers get a chance they cause a great many deaths but I think their time is quite plade (played) out in making rades in the Kansas. We got genal (general) Curtis to pectect Kansas.

Mrs. PECK you say the Sem. is quite prosperous under the charge of MILES PECK, now Mrs. PECK, I am all together out with Female Sem. and if all mothers knew as much as I do, very few would attend them. Give me a Sem. where both sex attend, then young ladyes will learn to be modest and retiring in their manners. Mrs. PECK, you may think me crazy, but with a few exceptions I never saw so much vulgarity among the back woods folks as I saw at that Sem., no more would I permit a daughter of mine to go there to school, no indeed, I would rather have them remain in ignorance, they would have less sin to answer for. Mrs. P., let what I have wrote be between you and me. I don't wish to injure any institution as for Miss CASTERLINE, never was there a more lovely young lady ever live than she is. She is modist, genteel and retiring. She is a person any young lady might well try to imertate (imitate). I am glad Mrs. PUBY reigns in the kitchen. I think fate will not try to make her pay dollars extry for wood nor will she cheat her out of her pay. I guess I would like to take a peek in there some time but I am out of the troop and thankful be I. You say ANNY goes. I am surprise (d). Would I send a child to school where such talk had been about me and my child. No indeed, I would not creep after any one but every one for their notion. Perhaps I am to peticler. The children are going to school, we have a very extry school. The teacher is a very fine young lady, every body is pleased with her, the scholars are learning very fast. FRANCES likes her very much, she is so good to explane. I expect FRANCES will go all summer. FRANCES says tell Mrs. PECK she likes Kansas very much. She would not come to Ill., she would like to have her brothers at home and I think they will be this summer, I hope so at any rate. I have not seen eather (either) since I came in to Kansas. GEORGE, when last heard from was in New Mexico, well and doing well, but this winter has been so severe that the Santa Fe mail has not come regler and it is 6 weeks since I got a letter from him. HARMIN wrote me last May and sent it to DuQuoin where it lay so long it was 7 month, 17 days reaching me. I lost all track of him but threw (through) the post master, Denver I learnt that he was in the ----- department in Col. teritory. I have wrote to him and shall look for an answer in 6 or 7 weeks. If you see any of Mr. McCLUREs folks tell them I receive(d) RUTHs letter and will answer it soon. We had 6 weeks very cold wether, the thermometer red 12 degrees below zero, but for 3 weeks past it is all most like summer, it is so plesent. I need not describe Kansas to you again but I will say to you, the longer I stay here the better I like, so you see I am not home sick, you must remember me to all inquiring friends. Since I wrote you before, I have visited Mrs. HARRIS, she seemed as glad to see me as tho I had been her sister and I was quite glad to see her though I was not much acquainted with her while in Ill. She told me to send her respects to you. She said she would like to write to her old friend but she has to write to 3 of her sons and one daughter every week, making 4 letters and when she gets them wrote and her work done, she is to tiard. EMERLY, her youngest, was at home with her, she has



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

got to be quite a young lady. She is quite pretty. You must write to HARMIN and GEORGE and all perticlers. Mrs. PECK I shall inclose a few lines to HOWARD and CALRACY, please give it to them. I think it would be much better for HOWARD if he was here, if they could be contented but I would not urge them to come for fear they would not like (it). There is many hard ships to go threw in a new country unless one has plenty to commence with, give our best respects to Mr. PECK and be a sharer your self.

From your sincere friend and well wishes, Mrs. CELINE PECK,  
C. A. WOOD

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Post Mark: Washington, D. C. Jan 23, 1865

Address: Mr. & Mrs. MILES PECK, DuQuoin, Perry Co., Ill.

Washington, D. C. Jan 23rd, 1865

To Mr. & Mrs. MILES PECK

Dear Uncle and Aunt,

You may be surprised at see a letter from one whom you may have almost forgotten, and of whom it is possible you seldom think, yet I cannot but cherish the thought that you have a recollection of EMILY F. PECK now E. F. DEXTER. (Direct your letter to No 374 4th St. Wash. D. C.)

I do not remember to have seen you for more than twenty years, not since your visit to uncle and aunt NORTON when living in Dryden, but my memory may be at fault.

I have often thought of writing to you when I have been visiting aunts SALLY of ELIZA but have always defered and now I feel more eager to write to you because I hope to interest you by telling you that for the first time in my life I visited good old Conn. last fall and went to nearly all the old homesteads where relatives lived. In Kent I went to see my HATCH cousins and also to to see my mothers maiden home (the BOTSFORD) homestead now occupied by cousin B. FULLER. He has built a nice house on the site of the old one. The barn however is still standing in which I was told mother used to spin.

In Cornwall I visited your former home and was much pleased with the farm, also saw the barn from which your fine horse was stolen. I liked the place much better than I expected. I also went to Grandfather PECK's grave. It seemed to me he was resting in a quiet pleasant place beneath the shade of a friendly tree. I went also to Mr. HARRY SWIFTS. He married cousin POLLY SACKETT.

In Elisworth I visited Mrs. JOSHUA EVERETT. She was Miss ELMIRA SKIFF, also became acquainted with Mrs. CALVIN PECK who was Miss MARY HEYT, also Miss ALMENA PECK, daughter of Cousin GEORGE PECK. I believe her parents are dead. In Warren I visited at Uncle DAN CARTERS, found him quite active though 83 yrs. old. One son, FRED CARTER, lives at home with his father. I was not aware that it was the place where grandmother lived when a young lady until I went there. I did not like it as well as the place in Cornwall. I visited cousin EMILY CARTER HOPKINS. Her husband, DEU. HOPKINS lives on his fathers farm on the bank of the lake. It is a beautiful place. They have two daughters and one son. I also visited at Mrs. JANE STARRS. She is a widow Her son, FRANK is married, has one child and they all live together and carry one large farm.

Went to cousin WARD CARTER's. He gave me as warm a welcome as any one in Warren. He grasped my hand saying "and this is the daughter of my beloved cousin JOSEPH PECK" and he made many inquiries about you as did all the friends. Visited at Cousin HORACE SACKETTs. He suffers greatly with asthma. Is living with his third wife. He married SARAH WARD CARTER's daughter for his present wife. He has two sons, one in the army, the other in the Navy, and one daughter who is being educated in New York City. Visited at Cousin CLARK SWIFTS - he is old now, but he and his wife seemed so fresh and young in their feelings that I enjoyed my visit there very much. They took me to Litchfield. RUFUS SWIFT is at Vineland, N. J. WILLIAM SWIFT was home from California with his wife and two children on a visit. The friends all wished me to write to you and assure you of their remembrance of you.

I found my relatives though strangers before very cordial, kind and hospitable and I enjoyed my visit in Conn. very much indeed.



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

My husband, Dr. J. E. DEXTER, is practicing medicine & surgery here at the National Capital. We like it as a place of residence very well. Sister JULIA lives in New York City-- brother DAVID is in New Lisbon, Wis. He and JULIA have each two daughters. I have no children. Uncle and Aunt NORTON were well when I heard from them last week. Uncle LUTHER is in feeble health but Aunt SALLY was in usual health when I last heard. Should this letter reach you and be so deemed worthy of an answer, I shall be glad to write again giving other items. Is cousin JOSEPH in the army. It seems as if I had heard so. Had he graduated from college. I would like to hear from him. Please write and tell me about yourselves, how you are situated, how you like Duquoin etc. etc. I shall be looking for an answer. Where is Uncle STILES widow, and how many children has she?

Love to you both and to cousin JOSEPH.

Your Aff. niece, EMILY F. DEXTER  
374 4th St. Washington D. C.

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Groton, N. Y. Apr 8, 1865

Address: MILES PECK, Esqur., Duquoin, Perry Co. Ill.

Groton Apr 5, 1865

Respected brother & Sister

Yours came to hand in due season and was much pleased to learn that you were still in the land of the living, and I can say that we are yet-----and enjoying comfortable health as could be expected in our present circumstances, we are both growing old and we have but a little while to stay at the longest, and the main point is to be prepared, for the time must and will come. We have not much news hear but the was and that is rather scarce at this time. You stated that you had not heard anything from my family since we wrote you last. They are all leaving here they made ----- & wrote you before except LEMONT, he is in Michigan, ADRIAN, Lawrence Co. My boys have not any of them gone into the army as yet as I know of. There (their) health is such that there is no use in taking them and we have filed out our quota by volunteers and there has not been any draft as yet.

MARY ANN is in Wisconsin along with ELIZA. STILES is in the army, EMILEY & JULIA are living in New York City. M? NORTON and ELIZA live on there (their) old place alone. BROWN has gone on to his farm at horse heads & heard from the other day. They were all well and enjoying it much. I am not doing any kind (of) business at the present & have sold out my feeds and your----- the first of april, but I expect to occupy half of the house this year but I have nothing to do with the farm, my health is not very good and thought that we would hang up our labour for a while and see how it seems.

If LUTHER has not filled the sheet I have taken my pen to thank you for your kind letter which ought to have been answered before this, but it has been very busy time with us as there are so many changes to be made in moving our things to give room for others. BERNARD and MALINDA BARCUZ live in the house with us, he rents the place this year. ARITTA is at home with us at the present, and we have one boarder, I think we shall not be very lonesome this summer, my health (was) not be very good this winter that a swollen under my arm which was quite troublesome for four weeks. We all have our ups and downs but have been able to help each other ----- most of the time. I would like to spend this summer in visiting our western friends but have made up our minds that it would not be best this year.

what is for us in the future we know not, but hope we may all see each other once more. When I left you and mother in Elmyra I thought perhaps we should not meet again, after mother was taken sick Mr. BROWN write to us that she was failing fast, we started the next day, in hopes to see her alive once more, arrived in time to attend the funeral, and follow her remains to the silent tomb, may we all be so happy as to meet where parting will be no more.

ELISA and Mr. NORTON were -----season, and we think of returning there visit when it gets to be good going.

I hope you will answer this soon. ARITTA thanks you for those lines you sent her, our



LETTERS FROM THE PAST

respects to HOMER and his mother should you see them and wish the same for you MILES PECK.

SALLY BERRY

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Post Mark: Warren -----

Address: MILES PECK, Esq. Duquoin, Perry Co. Illinois

Warren Nov. 23d 1865

Mr. MILES PECK

Dear Cousin

It has been a long time since I have heard from you and consequently know little of the changes time has wrought in your situation or your family but hope it has been well with you and that the common blessings of life have been granted you in your blessed home.

Our family are well as usual, brother CLARK is still living at the homestead, as (to) family, RUFUS has gone to southern N. Jersey to make a new home and brother WILLIAM is about locating near him. His wife and two little daughters have been here since last year, when brother returned from California where he had been since the spring of '49.

I have been staying with brother C. some months past and which is more my home. I have been called to part with my husband, he died the 6th of August last at Lay Hactn, N. J., his native place. He had a severe and lingering sickness of a pulmonary and bronchial affection. He had suffered much from his throat & for months could not speak above a whisper and towards the close of his life swallowed with great difficulty. two years ago he was wounded by the bursting of a shell that was being tried in s. Glocher, many others were also injured - some died. It was necessary for him to submit to amputation of the left leg which he bore with fortitude & survived it contrary to the expectations of all - as his physical strength was quite feeble, he slowly recovered & in six months by aid of crutches could walk about some and write for several publications till within about five months of his death. But he was a great sufferer most of the time - He had arranged his business matters - appropriating something for my support, among which are two notes he held of yours, given some years ago in Kentucky which you will doubtful remember - the first note is for \$20 dollars given Brandenburg, Nov. 2, 1837. The other \$57.50 is dated Brandenburg, August 31, 1846 - This is a long time ago yet it would oblige me very much if you would pay the money or a part of it - as I need it and should not have troubled you at this time were it not necessary - will you be so kind as to write what you can do in the matter and also suspecting the worse that you had of him. I don't know that he had your note for that or how it was left - will you explain it to me if you can that I may know - if there is anything coming to me from that source.

Brother C. would like to hear from you and often speaks of you - the reminiscences of past days are pleasant to him, he would like much to visit you but his many cares make it difficult to leave home for so long a journey. We should all be happy to see you here with your family again. Our warm friends are well. Uncle DAN CARTER is still quite active for one so old. "Mrs. GEORGE STAN" died some 3 weeks since and the family are now all gone except his youngest daughter SARAH. With kind regards to yourself and family hoping soon to hear from you, I remain your

affectionate Cousin, E. S. BYRAM

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Post Mark: Ravenna, O (Ohio). Oct 18, 1870

Address: Mrs. CELINA PECK, Duquoin, Perry Co. Illinois

Shalersville, Oct 15th 1870

Respected friends,

I take this opportunity to inform you that we arrived home safe on Wednesday morning, we did not go to Mattoon, came direct home and was glad to see the old place again.

We found everything right except MARY's bird that was dead and the cats had gone to the barn but they have come back all right now. BUCK has got pretty smart, to day he complains of a pain in his side again but I hope it will not last long.

## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

I wish you and JOSEPH had come home with us, I know it would have looked pleasant to you. There had been plenty of rain and every thing looks nice. BUCK says there is more green feed on our place than he saw in Illinois. May be you will think that is bragging some, to satisfy yourselves, just come out and see. We have fine weather just cool enough, we have had a little frost two or three nights, not to kill anything. Our hired man has gone visiting now, so MARY and I have been helping to pick up apples. LUTHER has drawn away about two hundred bushels, we have made a small begining. I have not seen any of BURTON folks since I came home, heard they were all well now. I do not suppose it will do any good to ask you to come and see us this fall but if you can read this, make calculations to come and see us next fall and see if your home don't look all the pleasanter when you get back.

I don't know as you can read this for MARY has got her cat close by, talking to it and I don't know whether I am writing or not, but if you can make out who it is from I want you to answer it. BUCK and MARY sends their respects and mine also, good by, for this time.

HARRIET PECK

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Post Mark: Ravenna, O. (Ohio)

Address: JOSEPH PECK, DuQuoin, Perry Co. Illinois

Shalersville, Sept 10th 1871

Dear friend Celina

I received your letter, was glad to hear that you were comfortable, sorry to think you are not going to make us a visit. We had thought you and JOSEPH would surely make us a visit this fall. Hope you may yet. BUELS health is not very good this fall, his cough is bad and he feels as though his work was nearly done. MARY has left her bird and cats and gone to Painesville to school, it is a female seminary. I guess that she and JOSEPH will have to keep old maids and old bachelors hall. She must go to Painesville because there was no boys. She has been gone about two weeks. I guess she is some home sick but she will get over that after a little. ALMA has been quite sick this summer. She works some now but is not feeling as well as common. The rest of the friends are well. We have had a very good season, crops have come in pretty good. Corn is uncommon heavy, a great deal of it is ripe and cut up. There is not as much fruit this fall as there was last but enough for home use. I wish you and JOSEPH would come to Ohio. I believe you would like this place better than Illinois. It would look like small farming to JOSEPH. I presume he would get use to that and may be enjoy better health. That is worth more than a large field of corn or a ten acre mellon patch. We have a small patch in the garden and that is more than we can eat. We have milked 17 cows this summer. Our milk went to the factory. We set it every night now. That makes a great many chores for me to do alone but I get around in the course of the day. Stock of all kinds is low with us and previsions too. I think they pay about one dollar twenty for wheat, thirty five for oats, not much sale for cows. The dull times for money that we have known for years. Pork worth three and a half to four. We can eat all we want and have visitors. It can't cost nothing this year so come and see us. We will make it as pleasant as we can. I don't know as I have any news to write so good by for this time. My respects to all inquiring friends, write as often as you can.

BUEL sends his respects, says tell JOSEPH to be sure to come and see us.

HARRIET PECK

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(The following letter does not have a date, but possibly goes in this time period.)

Post Mark: Elkhville, Ill. Jan 17, ----

Address: Mr. JOSEPH PECK, DuQuoin, Perry Co. Ills.

Cox Prairie, Jan 9th -----  
Tuesday Evening

Dear JOSEPH;

I received your letter yesterday and was very much pleased to hear from one that I esteem so highly. I am glad that you are so happy. The reason there of which you left me to guess about. I am a yankee for guessing and guess I do not come far short of the mark. If two persons love



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

each other as they might, then every trial through life seems easy to bear. My school is very large, it nearly wears me out. Teaching is hard work if a person does their duty and I try to do mine as near as I possibly can. I received the ring, it just fits. It just ----- me what a dear, good man. I am glad you are reading my book. I was afraid you would become disgusted with it at the commencement and throw it aside. If you do not wish me to say anything on religious matters I will desist but I will pray for you that some time you may know that there is such a thing as religion. You must not think that because I believe this I think myself perfect. Oh no, I am far from it but enough of this. What I have read in your little book I like very much. I do not get very much time to read. Last sabbath we all had a sleigh ride. We went about four miles. You must not think me wicked but I did enjoy the ride. It is not often that we get such a treat as a sleigh ride, but from the appearance of the weather now the ----- to stay on some time. I commenced on the wrong side of my paper but did not see my mistake till I had got considerable written so I thought I would first let it go. I must close, my eyes say nine o'clock. Hoping to hear from you soon. I bid you good night.

Yours            ADDIE  
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Post Mark: Bradley, Ill. April 16/74  
Return Address: A. C. Genung  
Address: Mr. JOSEPH E. PECK, DuQuoin, Illinois

Bradley, Jackson Co. Illinois  
April 12th 1874

Friend JOSEPH:

Yours of the 15th ult. was received in due time, and I assure you read with much interest. I have been exceedingly busy the last few weeks on the farm, trying to get ready for spring plowing. I have just finished placing out about 200 fruit trees - apples, peaches and cherries (Very choice kinds.) The site chosen was the oldest field on the place, and to insure thrifty and vigorous growth etc. dug holes and filled with rich loam from the woods. The job was somewhat bigger than I anticipated, and took considerable work to get them in properly. I have just finished up clearing for good and all, as my place is now all cleared that I intend taking in. Shall leave about eight acres in timber, which is excellent. My farm (if it deserve the name) I suppose would look insignificant to you, but it is as large as my limited means would reach. It is situated remarkably favorable for wheat and fruit, being very high, said to be the highest point between Saint Louis and Cairo. I intend to gradually plant out the place to choice varieties of fruit, mostly I think, winter apples, and while the trees coming to maturity raise wheat and "truck" for market.

I think I shall like farming very well. The work does not average harder than at the bench, and there is more independence, and leisure - besides there is always something in which to be interested.

I am glad to hear of your having a good place, and of your domestic happiness and felicity. I am still alone.

Your tract was read with much interest and satisfaction, and father was much pleased with it. It is excellent and timely. Our opinions, as you say, are very much the same, in fact they are the only ones possible to entertain that will reconcile themselves with the teachings of science. The better informed among all classes and in every country, are gradually accepting liberal ideas, and the old tyrant, theology, must certainly succumb to an enlightened civilization. If men will believe themselves possessed of a religious nature, and want to bow down in adoration, let them worship the divinity of nature, as manifested in the universe. That there is a force behind nature, which gives it the push, I do not believe, and defy any one to show. And in regard to the thinking principle in man being distinct from animal organization, and therefore entitled to continued existence, the idea is merely a pleasing dream, wholly unsupported by even a shadow of evidence.

Concerning a revelation from deity to man, I have to long ceased to investigate the testimony relating to such a document, that I have forgotten thee arguments, pro and con.

It is growing late and I shall defer writing further till another time.

I have not read ABBOTTS "God of Science", but I am enough acquainted with his method

## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

of thought to know something of its nature. As you say his philosophy is a kind of Pantheism, which is only another name for high-falutin materialism. ABBOTT, however, is doing much good; his way of expressing himself is very effective in reaching a certain class of readers. The same can be said of most of the free Religionists. I took the "Index" some time ago but do not see it now. Neither do I see the "Investigator", and did not see it last year. While in St. Louis I wrote for it occasionally. I will inclose one of the articles, which please read and return.

Concerning books: I have not read either of TYNDALs books; only a course of lectures on light, delivered in St. Louis. Neither have I seen much of HERBERT SPENCERs, except in reviews etc. and some articles in the popular Science Monthly. I know I should like his writings, I have read (with much interest) DARWINs "Origin of Species," it is a masterpiece of research, but I consider his deductions unsound, and from AGASSIZ view, to a certain extent, but not wholly. I also read HUXLEYs "Lay Sermons" and consider them superior to orthodox ones. I am acquainted with LOCKE; he is of course now out of date in many things, but at the time he wrote had few equals (DAVID HUME, however was his superior). I am also acquainted with the "Vestiges", it was a noble little book at the time it was put out - far in advance of the times. This work furnished occasion for much controversy concerning its authorship, and it was attributed to COMB, CHAMBERS and to Prof. OWEN, it was probably the offspring of several authors.

I have the "Childhood", but think it hardly outspoken enough, still it is excellent.

When in St. Louis I had access for a time to the library of the Polytechnical (that word is always a jaw breaker) Institute, and read some splendid books, but not as many as I should have done.

In regard to my writing for print, I will say that I make no pretensions to literary knowledge or skill, but write simply for recreation. I have heretofore made no effort at presuing anything philosophical, leaving that to those who could advance something new. but I find that most of what is written is merely a rehash of what has been repeated and in future I shall follow in the path of the plagiarists.

Let me call your attention to a series of little pamphlets published by ESTES and LAURETTE, Baston, (Boston?) called "Half Hour Recreations in Popular Science" (12 in number, at 25 cts each) Bennett Kempe -----.

Did you ever see the "Modern Thinker", it is unique. I have the first number. Are you taking the N. York Tribune, Religious Philosophical Journal (a rascally sheet) Golden Age, and Truth Seeker. I write this in haste, and although I have made out quite a long letter it seems to me I have said nothing.

I am busy on an article for BENNETT, headed (if I don't alter it) "The Nature and Destiny of the Intellect". It is a conglomerate of what every body already knows.

I see that considerable interest is being felt in favor of cremation, which you know is the burning the dead, a good plan, for who wants his body after life is extinct, to become a recepticle for loathsome worms. But I must close. Thank you for your kind invitation to correspond. I accept, but on condition that you do not reprimand when I become dilatory. Good night.

Bradley, Ill.

April 12th, 1874 Con't

This evening I got my logs all burning finely, when a torent of rain came and put them all out, I expect some christian prayed for rain, not knowing my situation.

This reminds me of MARK TWAINs statement that where he accompanied the party of clergymen that went on a pilgrimage to the Holy land, that while returning to America the custom was to pray for favorable winds, where every priest aboard knew that at that season of the year twenty vessels sailed East where one sailed west--consistency.

Very respectfully, your friend etc.

A. O. GENUY

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## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

Post Mark: Bradley, Ill, July 29/74  
Address: J. E. PECK, Esq. Duquoin, Illinois

Bradley, Jackson Co. Ills.  
July 26th, 1874

Friend JOSEPH

Your last letter was read with interest, as usual. For several reasons - consisting in the main of the pressing nature of farm work, and of the depressing influence of the "heated term" - I have somewhat neglected writing; and if I may be permitted to speak plainly, I do not even now feel like -----ditive any-thing of an entertaining character.

Regarding the "Liberal League" I will say this: probably the motive is for its organization is all very well. But I have no faith in organized effort toward general enlightenment. It seems to me that the only true solution to the problem of the final and complete enfranchisement of the human mind, consists in individual intellectual advancement. A feeling of friendly regard for it, as an auxiliary to Mateneaker, but recently I am becoming almost liberal in my estimate of that sect. Appropoo of this, you are probably aware that WALLACE has joined them and that our BENNETT of the F. S. is editing the U. L. "Spiritualist at work" in conjunction with WILLSON of "Journal" noteriety.

I have recently read the following very entertaining books and pamphlets, the "Pyramides" or sacred book of the Egyptians. Also the "Masculine Cross or Ancient Sex Worship". And some copies of "Half Hour Recreations etc." entitled respectively "Cranial affinities of man and the ape" - "Spectrum Analysis" and "Unconsciousness Action of the Brain". I am not familiar with the writing of SPENCER (unfortunately) and can not write of them intelligently. Neither do I see the Pop. Sci. monthly regularly.

I like that periodical however very much, far better than any other issued in this country. I received the "Index" containing your excellent article.

The other day in looking over an old number of the Investigator I noticed two criticisms on some writer signing the name "EVELYN", and noticing that said article was entitled "Soul Problems" - remembered that it must have been yours.

You have probably read my article in the T. S. "Recolections of FRANCIS WRIGHT" and The Nature and Destiny of the Intellect." The former had the tenor of being cryptic in the investigation. By the way - what a grand old talisman does that paper continue to be ever vigilant, and always true to the cause of enlightenment. Yes, as you say in substance, most of the philosophical disputation in the world (of late) consist of an endeavor to unravel and explain the conundrum of the universe and its laws. I believe you are perfectly right in your deductions concerning the identity of matter and mind. To my understanding they are nearly (or quite in a sense) synonymous terms. Either from my lack of reading and consequent inability to appreciate accurate reasoning - or from the prevailing medley (perhaps muddle) would be the more suitable term) of philosophical disquisition - most of the controversy of the day on that point is to me idle meta-physics, or unswearing rhapsody.

All we know is that the thinking principle is always found in strict conjunction with the body, precisely as gravity is only known in its relation to planetary and stellar worlds, whether the -----nts (the human mind and the principle of gravity) are the result of organization, or are co-eternal with it, matters nothing to the question, for if either hypothesis were determined, the question of the existance of a creator remains utterly beyond the reach of demonstration - until the old arguments and objections to the possibility of even the existence of a rational creative principle are satisfactorily answered, it seems futile to attempt to explain the origin of things on these grounds.

All the philosophy since ARISTOTTLE has failed to prove the existence of a creator, and PALEYs old watch theory (now generally abandoned by close thinkers) is the only system left worthy to be noticed. That there is a force acting in and through nature we all know, but we can not take any cognizance of anything apart from it. and to me the mind in man - and in all animals - is as much the result of material combination, as is the principle of chemical affinity.

The other theory of the existence of mind in nature in a condition coequal with animal organization is certainly untenable. For instance it is ridiculous to suppose that the full grown



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

mind of an adult individual is some where in existence, when that individual is in an embryo state, and even before conception begins.

I would like to say a word concerning my view of the relative merits of DARWIN versus AGGASIZ, regarding the origin of animal and vegetable life, but have no time. My opinion however, to be very brief is this: - Evelution as put forth by DARWIN, HUXLEY, WALLACE, SPENCER and the rest must be in the main correct, but the theory of the "natural selection", "Survival of the fittest" etc. however true they may be in - degree, does not explain all.

AGGASIZ accepts evolution (not DARWINism) but ignores the idea that original types may be explained from such a theory. This is my belief, and I further believe that the origin of animal and vegetable like - like the true meaning and significance of that force which rules and permeates the universe - must ever remain locked up in the secret and impenetrable archives of nature. This I am aware, as saying a good deal - in the face of an age of discovery and enlightenment - Yet these things seem to be so completely removed from the most searching scrutiny of men, that they must ever remain simply matters for speculation.

I suppose the BEECHER-TILTON affair is now uppermost in the minds of many. I am quite an admirer of the former when considered in the character of an enlightened and liberal orthodox and yet in this matter I thoroughly believe TILTON to be right. Mr. B. has probably used his priestly craft and influence to appropriate Mrs. T. - a course so thoroughly characteristic of the cloth that it has become the standing fist and reproach to that profession. And how despicable does it seem for such men as Dr. BACON and others to rally in his defence.

BEECHER must fall - but what a calamity!

The season has been (since April) one prolonged drouth, until recently, when several refreshing rains have visited us.

Wheat was good. I shall thrash about 300 bu. and my corn looks fair, oats and all garden was a total failure. Peaches not a quarter crop, except Hales Early, which are full. Apples next to nothing.

I am breaking fallow ground, and begin today on stubble. Shall only sow about 16 acres (White May and Bull).

Bradley, Jackson Co. Ills

July 26th, 1874 Con't

TILTON has sold out the Golden Age to J. T. CLARKE. It is enlarged and much improved. If you should have any periodicals which you think would interest us, and will mail them, I will renumerate you for postage. And may be able to send you something. We take nothing but the Golden Age, N. Y. Tribune, and Truth Seeker.

Write, like the N. York Irish vote, "soon and often".

A. O GENUING

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Post Mark: Bradley Ill. March 18 (1875)

Address: J. E. PECK, Esq. Duquoin, Perry Co. Illinois

Campbell Hill (Bradley P. O.) Illinois

Dear Friend,

One effect of your novel and interesting paper in the Truth Seeker was to remind me that I had too long neglected writing, and now, if I have not transcended the limits of your patience, I will answer - Perhaps it may not be altogether without interest for me to tell you of a somewhat daring innovation with which I have become connected. Shortly after my return home from your place my friend Mr. HINDMAN (he whom I introduced to your acquaintance) a young man named SWARTZ KOCH, and myself, endeavored to inaugurate a liberal movement in this vicinity. We knew well at the beginning that we had no one to buck or encourage us in the enterprise and expected little success. It would be too long a story to state how and with what difficulties we finally obtained the school house of our district, the directors of which are strict religionists - one a preacher - but suffice to say we did get it for the 2nd sunday of each month. The result of the enterprise has more than fulfilled our expectations, and at the two initiatory meetings. We have had fair and very attentive audiences. S. is a man of fair oratorical powers. H. talks well and to the point, and G. reads choice selections from liberal authors and at times -----



LETTERS FROM THE PAST

-- the multitude orally.

If you can imagine what a sensation three bull hornets would make in one of qumbys patent bee guns, you may be able to form some conception of things as they exist here just now. The church has entirely forgotten the precepts taught by the lord J. and had it the power, would do as did the pious Christian CONSTATINE, by his wife, boil us in a caldron; or as CALVIN served ---, warm us with green wood; or again as the Christian jury served Knuland, incarcerate us in a dungeon. One of our clergy believing that H. was the weaker vessel of our trio, chalenged him for public discussion on the plenary inspiration of the old and new, but upon his chalenge being immediately accepted, declined, and wouldn't discuss worth a cent. The propositions had been put in writing.

I have been reading "Jones Church History" two large volumes, and am surprised that men can not see the villany of priests in every age, and the shallowness of the foundation on which the superstructure of all religious are based. "O for a lodge in some vast wilderness" where superstition does not corrupt, and science reigns supreme!

Since I wrote you last (I think) I have read WALLACE's pamphlet on Spiritualism. It is quite a labored production, but so far as I see he adds nothing to the evidence and theories already produced. He claims among other things that the spirit form is a complete and perfect duplicate of the present organization, but such a theory has many objections. Is not BENNETT's "Visit to Dr. S" a stuner? I am inclined to believe that the phenomena accused, as I myself have seen, years ago, in N. York a heavy cherry table swing six inches from the floor. This occured at night, but with two large lamps on the table. Heavy taps also occured. But notwithstanding my present belief that some of these phenomena occur, I am at times almost ready to believe that they are all an illusion of the senses. I knew this, that I have seen a dozen men made to believe that a common bench, on which they were sitting, was a serpent, and while in this condition, psychological, no power on earth could make them think differently. Well, the BEECHER trial is still on the lips of men, but it is difficult to forecast what is in the future. The evidence certainly seems to be on the side of the innocent party, but I have lived long enough to know victory does not always perch on the banners of the deserving. O when will men learn that a wolf not infrequently hidden under the regal cloak of a rich "pastor."

"Tis not the white -----, nor stubborn fast, or stated prayers that make us great. We "judge the tree by what it bears." A. CAREY

Well I have more to say, but it is growing late and I am tired. I may add more before mailing and may not.

Respectfully your friend  
A. O. GENUNG

I have read the "Heathens" with considerable satisfaction. I also read Exelir-Hall, when it first appeared.

I suppose you have read, the GLADSTONE and PANTIFF controversy. I think the ex-premier rather warms up the old man in Rome. I have not seen DRAPER's great book, but have read several extracts, reviews etc. It must be an annihilater.

My health is, I think, gradually mending. I am waiting for favorable weather to plow for oats. Hoping this may find your self and family well, I close.

Let me hear from you when convenient.

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Post Mark: Campbell Hill, Mrch 11, 1878  
Address: JOSEPH E. PECK, Duquoin, Perry Co. Ills.

Campbell Hill Ills.  
Mch. 10, 1878

Friend JOSEPH:

As the Spiritualists would say the "conditions" are favorable for my writing you an entertaining letter. The room is full of company and I know of nothing short of a confusion of tongues that would have any tendency to quiet the clamor. But here goes:

Well JOE, my present attitude on the question of finances is a but this: I recognize full the great difficulty of adjusting the money question in accordance to principles of justice, for the

## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

reason that the entire batch of laws bearing on this important matter are founded in error. The question of the character and purpose of money is an extensive one, and were I qualified (which I am not) to elucidate it, such an act would necessitate more space than the limits of a letter. But never the less it appears to me that I see some things concerning it quite clearly.

I claim, 1st that government should have exclusively the power to create money. This right is violated, in that National banks are empowered to exercise this important function. 2nd, I claim that the laws calling into being the US Bonds is a direct wrong, and places an unnecessary burden on the people. And 3d, I claim that all variety of money should have an equal value. To me, the idea of one kind of money being a legal tender and another not - of congress having the power to "demonetize" and "remonetize" money, and of one species of money being taxable and another not, is simply preposterous. Congress may tinker the finances of the country till doomsday, and the result will be the same. The question of what constitutes the basis of the circulating medium of this country, is certainly very imperfectly understood, or else is subjected to gross misrepresentation. The finances, like water, must find their level, and however such these imperfect laws are tampered with and mended, the result will be a muddle at last.

Now JOE, understand me! I am no repudiationist, and I do not want the law to sacrifice one iota of its honor. But still I believe it to be utterly unjust and impracticable to resume specie payments. Such a course must eventually bring disaster and ruin (to thousands) for the very reasons that the laws calling for resumption, are wrong. I am not just now prepared to say just what course would be just and judicious to pursue in the matter. But I think that some kind of a compromise between the laws and its creditors will in time be brought about.

You say that you were "astounded" at my conversion to the greenback. You will doubtless be still greater astounded when I inform you that I am in favor of that much abused thing known as "absolute money". I know this is making a startling admission, and one that throws me open to criticism, still I believe that divested of all feelings of regard for antiquated custom, and of prejudice and early education, it is not so terrible after all.

In considering this subject, let me ask you a question. In our everyday experiences of bodily wants, what is it that we, as intelligent beings, need and desire. Is it money - gold and silver possessing intrinsic value? No, for money - no matter of how much intrinsic value - would not clothe, feed, and house us. What we need and desire is, principally clothing, food, and shelter. Now it seems to me, that what we need is a circulating medium which represents - not precious metals - but something which we desire to possess. This can be brought about in this way: Let Gov. create an absolute legal tender lawful money. Not a promise to pay, understand, but an irredeemable token. You will say right off, that no law can give a token a purchasing power. I answer that gold itself (coin) does not possess its face value apart from the stamp that it bears. And again, the fact of any token possessing a debt - paying power (legal tender) naturally gives it a purchasing power. For example, everybody owes somebody else, and will sell what he has for something that will liquidate that debt. You read carefully what I say in this parentheses: (I admit that it has been customary among civilized nations to use precious metals bearing Gov. stamp as a circulating medium of exchange. But I deny the necessity of such a course. To most men this appears visionary. When this Gov was formed Republicanism was equally visionary. I believe this nation possesses the right and power to mark out an original and scientifically correct course. That is, as I said before, to create an absolute token. A paper one would be most convenient and practicable, although anything would do which is not easily counterfeited and cheap. The most formidable objection to this course is that such a token would not possess an international value. But bear in mind that our gold and silver only passes value in foreign countries as a commodity. This objection I think can be easily bridged over. Some will urge that such a medium would lack stability especially in times of war or natural peril. I reply that it would be based on the wealth of the country, and that should national disaster and destruction, overtake us, redeemable paper would be equally worthless.

Our money possesses value (with the exception of the gold and silver in the country - and this only as a commodity) precisely in proportion to the safety of the nation.

You say there are three things necessary to make a stable currency - common consent, 2nd intrinsic value, 3rd comparative scarcity. Strike out No. 2 and you are correct. There is much



LETTERS FROM THE PAST

interesting matter in your letter that I would like to notice, but "space and time" forbids.

You must pardon me when I say that you, in common with many other well meaning persons are slaves to the idea that what gives stability to our currency is the fact of its possessing intrinsic value. why sir; if the stamp were obliterated from the face of the world, gold would cease to be worn as ornaments by the rich. No, if the principle I have pointed out be true in a degree, it is true wholly. Place the same stamp on paper, and the paper token would be equally valuable, with the great advantage that such a course would render the finances simple to a school boy, and preclude this endless and disgraceful quarreling and gambling by those who grow rich simply by manipulating the currency.

A. O. GENUNG      Answer

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Post Mark: New York, Apr 11, 12 M  
Address: Mr. JOSEPH E. PECK, DuQuoin, Illinois

New York, Apr 10, 1878

Mr. J. E. PECK,  
Dear Sir;

Yours of the 5th at hand. According to all ordinary calculations, Soul Problems should have sold the whole edition by this time. But you know how utterly disappointing everything is at this time, and for the last four years. There may be this reason besides. The name Soul may have frightened the free thinkers, if they did not stop to read the explanation in advertisements or examine the book. But, occasionally, when everything points to the success of a book, it will not sell. It is usually an indication that a book is better than others when it does not sell. But, as the Freethought is in the increase, and Liberal Leagues are organizing freely: the object of the latter being that the book treats on very conclusively. The book is likely to sell in the future more than in the past. And you will notice we are advertising more and more, which will have its effect ultimately.

Last summer you had a statement of our affairs. Our condition is much the same now as then. But very few books of any kind have sold since, not more than five or six, we think. We will count up when enough sell to make it an object, and will remit according to contract. We stand as before now - about even. But any book of our own publication, to a reasonable amount, we are willing to send to you on acct, altho it leave you in our debt. As for money, we cannot send you in advance of sales, but we would gladly do it if we were doing the good business you surmise. It has been frequently the case that the capital to issue the new books you are advertised has been furnished us by outside parties, and we have to render a strict acct. therefor. Then there are so many in the Liberal book business now that there are "too many bites to the cherry". Instead of showing the honor of Christians, and sustaining us - the first ----- publishing house started several, are starving at it.

We think it will sell ultimately and it deserves to. We very much regret that so far, the book has not sold.

Yours sincerely,  
C. P. SOMERBY

(The above letter concerns a little book titled "Soul Problems" that JOSEPH PECK had written. Apparently it was not doing well.)

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Post Mark: Georgetown, D. C. Jul 14, 9 a.m. 1884  
Address: Mrs. ADDIE E. PECK, DuQuoin Perry Co. Ills.

Washington, D. C.  
July 13/84

Dear Cousin ADDIE;

Please excuse this pencil, my pen is so bad that I cannot use it. Your letter to me duly to hand, was glad to hear from you. But sorry that you are not to be bountifully blessed in the productions of your farm. I know something about such disappointment and their consequences. I tell you cousin ADDIE what you must do. Sell out & go out to the great state of Kansas. I have no doubt but you would both be suited out their. It is a great state, and has wonderful resourses.

## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

And certainly is much more healthy there than in Ills. I am glad to hear that JOHN and Uncle like it so well. How I should like to see them all and if I live and they live I spect to. One of my little boys is sick to day he had a chill yesterday. My health is not very good. This climate and the office work or both does not agree with me. I wish you and family were here for dinner. I tell what we are going to have. Blackberries for desert, just fresh from the hills of Va., picked by Miss MILES this morning. Custard fine - cherrie jell and rasberry jell, peas and new potatoes raised on the sacred soil of Va. some bacon which was raised in Kansas and shiped to eastern markets. And blackberry jam, come down and see how a sick man can put himself on the out side of a large pile (re)garding truck (garden produce). I think it a caution that CLARRIEs health can be much improved by any climate. But I would not be surprised if she did not soon weigh 300#, I think she is a boomer. I wish you would tell her for me that I would like to hear her say something before long, and John I have never heard from since he got his pension. I should like to know how he is getting along by word of mouth. Well I must bring my letter to a close, hoping to hear from you soon. I will assure you that I shall not forget to see you when I come home. I can not tell you how long it will be before I come home, but I will let you know.

Your Aff. Cousin.

F. A. MILES

Complements to the old Boy, the Husband

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Post Mark: Washington, D. C. Dec. 1, 1884 4 p. m.

Addressed: Mrs. ADDIE E. PECK, Duquoin, Perry Co. Ills.

Well MAY, I will try and write you a few lines all though I'm in quite a hurry, you are well come (welcome) to your present, wish it had been more.

Granny won't get my rage either. I'd haunt her if she was to. Poor WILL WICKLINE, I am afraid you have gone back on him. I guess ELI will be around to see his red headed girls this summer, don't break his poor heart if he cares. Well May, if you were to start to town here instead of wrapping up, you'd get you parasol. You can see them on the street almost any day you go to town. Well, Miss PECK, I will write a few lines to you. I thank you for your kind letter, wish I could have sent a nicer present than I did. I made everything out of just what I had on hand. You ought to see my gown. I crotcheted the yoke and collar and around the sleeves etc., put a piece 2 inches wide down the sleeves, it is just handsome. I am feeling well and eating hearty now so I guess I won't be as peaked long, but I fell away awfully while I was sick.

Excuse mistakes. In a hurry. Love to all. Write soon.

Your true friend

MATTIE PROW

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Post Mark: Georgetown Sta. D. C. Dec 31 12M

Address: Miss MAY PECK, DuQuoin Perry Co. Ills (In care of J. E. PECK)

Washington, D.C. , Dec. 30th, 1884

Dear Cousin MAY;

Was real glad to get a letter from you. And think the cards you sent are very nice. We were glad to learn that we were remembered by our friends. I kindly thank you for my cards and OLLIE is very much pleased with hers. I will send you this little lamp-matt, and OLLIE this little new years card. This little bottle containing Musk, OLLIE sends you. I was not surprised at all to get a letter from you. Am very sorry your grandma is sick. Yes, I hope we can stop at your house on our way to Kansas. It seems like a long time to stay here among strangers. Where all my relation is 1,400 miles away, but guess I can stand it. I am afraid Grandma HARRISON will not be alive when I get back. I would like so much to see my two Grandmas. We live one mile from West Washington or what is known as Georgetown and one mile from the National Cemetery at Arlington Heights. The old home of Gen. R. E. LEE and the cemetery incloses more than twenty two thousand graves of union soldiers. It is just a sight to see. Just wish you could see it. And the Washington Monument is 555 feet high. We can look out of our front door and see it plain. and we can see the dome of the capital surmounted with the goddess of liberty. Guess I will haft to close for this time. Hoping to hear from you more. I remain as ever, your cousin



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

MARY MILES

Write to me often. Excuse this lead pencil, MAY PECK

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Post Mark: Campbell Hill, Ill. Feb 5, 1885

Address: JOSEPH E. PECK, Duquoin Perry County, Ills.

Campbell Hill, Ills.

Feb. 8th 1885

Friends JOSEPH and Mrs. PECK;

After so long a silence on our part, which has amounted to almost neglect, I take it for granted that a letter will still be welcome in any event, and so sit down this Sunday morning to write you a line or possibly several.

I mailed you a card some time ago stating that we would come out, but roads & weather have, as you must have known, effectually prevented.

At the present time we are all quite well excepting CHARLES who has been down many months. He was taken some six months ago with a severe lameness in his back and has been confined to his room and bed ever since. We think there is no prospect of a recovery, that is of a permanent one. Mother's death a few years since was a blow from which he seems unable to recover. Father is moderately well. I was very busy myself and one and two hands, at house painting all summer and have just completed a block of two storey brick stores in this place. I have succeeded in building up quite a good reputation in plain and decorative (graining) painting and now have this country to myself. Last spring a "fine haired" stranger came in and after working for me two months set up for himself playing the popularity (church) dodge. He succeeded in getting all the best work and near town and drove me far into the country. On my return home however the work - 4 good buildings, was turned over to me, he moving on. (unskillful & careless work the cause).

I do not remember if I told you anything of my being also engaged in portraiture. (I don't mean my Terrotype Gallery which my wife operates summers).

Some 2 1/2 years ago I received instructions in the art of making Crayon portraits - life size & under. I never succeeded in introducing them until this winter. I have made to order two pictures at \$15.00 and \$20.00 respectively and now have orders for four more. I mark them in 14 x 17 - 18 x 22 and 22 x 27 sizes and for \$15.00 - \$20.00 and \$25.00, and from there up in expensive polished walnut frames. You probably know what crayon is, all done by hand, and when well executed, truly magnificent. My work is considered very fine indeed, and when I come out to see you - which I surely shall do - intend bringing samples of work.

Two of my pictures ordered are for GEORGE & Mrs PARRUNT, N. C. STEBBINS who is operating a saloon here, also, I think, will have one made.

And now for philosophy! We are taking no reform or radical papers. The Review having suspended publication. But I have read some good books. Among them, ENGERSOLLS "Gems of Thought", HENRY GEORGE "Progress and Poverty" and "Social Problems", all magnificent works. Especially the last two. I consider Mr. GEORGE the most extraordinary writer on polittle-economy living. His style is fluent, powerful and eloquent, and his positions unanswerable. He traces the unequal distribution of wealth and happiness among men directly to private ownership of land, and not only this but prints out a remedy. His books are not cranky in any sense - but pains taking, thorough and convincing. so prepare to give up your broad and smiling acres! (ISABEL is not a correct nor a fluent letter-writer and she says Mrs. PECK is a former teacher. You know the rest.)

I took no part in politics, not even enough to vote. My choice was BUTLER, but there being no electoral tickets accessible (another beauty of existing things) I declined to choose between what appeared to me to be two evils, and respectfully declined. I look for trouble ( but on the contrary, some benefits) from the change of programme. And what is my opinion of the Dynamiters? Well I will tell you. I am as you know, no friend of violence or anarchy, as such. But the problem to be worked is something like this: England is a robber and Ireland, is the robbed. England is the oppressor & Ireland is the oppressed. Poor downtrodden, famished, exiled Ireland, with all your faults you have my hearts best sympathy! All who are not frail opinion,

## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

make known that the object of the revolutionists is not to kill and maim a few individuals, but to menace, agitate and attract attention to Irelands wrongs. Very respectfully.

A. A. GENUNG

Our town is improving somewhat and the country especially is looking up. Many new farm houses in contemplation. Most of my work is in the country. My health is not good. Suffer from great heat in my head, caused from derangement of organs of hearing (on one side only) want to follow crayon exclusively. JOE if possible come out and see us this spring or summer. I have plenty of room for man and beast, and will try to use you well, come via 4 and 6 mile prairies. I had no room to say that we all wish to be remembered to Grandma. I hope you are still all well and that you had no difficulty in pulling through with your purchase. I would like to hear from you often, and sincerely hope that crops and luck generally have been favorable.

If convenient write, both of you, and let us know what you are reading and thinking about.

A. A. G. (A. A. GENUNG)

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Post Mark: Gaylord, Kan. Mar. 31, 1885

Address: Mrs. ADDIE PECK, DuQuoin, Ills.

Gaylord, March 31st

Dear Sister & Family;

We received your letter saturday & will answer it now for fear I will put it off too long. We are having beautiful weather now. we are fixing to plant corn, our oats are in and up, our wheat looks fine but is needing rain some. LAD is here, has got work at 75 cts. a day to plow. He wants his folks to sell and come west. If your cough does not get better I want you to come west this summer and don't try to make butter to sell. You have enough to do to do all your work and take care of Grandma. I am afraid it will wear you sick to your grave. Don't do as BELL done, but let the work go and try and take care of your self. It is more necessary to take care of your self than any thing else. I have not seen Aunt LUCY since Christmas. CHARLEY and ELMER are working from home and have hired IREMUS to work on the farm. He has a wife and child he has just come on. They are going to live with SEANGES folks and I am afraid (that) won't suit Aunt LUCY. ----- our hogs are doing well, we have not lost any this cold winter. What was the matter with HENRY's hogs, didn't he have corn to feed them. How is HENRY's corn, did he raise enough to do him and did he have any wheat and oats and how is he doing about a team. I don't believe he will ever do anything where he is if the wheat is a poor crop there this year. What are the farmers going to do there anyway. You had all better sell and come west while you have a little to come with. If you stay there much longer you will have nothing to come with or nothing to stay there with either. LAD has asked how to make a V so I made one on my letter. He is writing to VIOLET. He seems delighted with this part of the world, he says he will never go back to Ill. to live. Have you heard any thing from Cous. FRED. He has not been to see you get, has he. The children are going to school and I have the work and the garden to make and it keeps me busy.

School will be out the last of April, I began my letter bottom side up and hind side and I can't see the limes half the time. JOHN is writing and LAD is writing and ELSIE is climbing on my back. Her and JOHNIE goes down to the school house most every day. There is no new babies at out house, but there has been several in the neighborhood. It is a good country on babies. Tell MAY that the girls will write soon now. ADDIE, take care of your self and -----the work go. JOHN says tell HENRY if he was out here he could divide corn with him but he can't help him there. Write soon, love to all.

Aunt CLEMIE

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Gaylord, Kan. Jun 6, 1885

Address: Miss ADDIE PECK, DuQuoin, Perry Co. Ill.

May 31, 1885

Dear Cousin ADDIE;

I thought perhaps you would like to hear from me by this time. We are all well at present,



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

and every thing is booming, wheat looks well around here but down on the Salimon Valley it has all been ate up by the weavle (weevil). There is none here yet but it may come yet, where wheat is thin, they take it. But fortunately ours is very thick, most of it. I do hope that we will be blessed with a good crop this year, it would help us out so much. I hear that the wheat is all winter killed, this I am sorry for. So many depend on their wheat crop. I don't know what they will do. We have 12 acres on our own farm that is part as good as it can be and 15 on rented land not quite so good, but if the weavle don't get in to it, it will make a very fair crop.

We have put out 50 apple trees and some small fruit this spring from the nersury. They are all doing well. We hope to have some fruit some time. CHARLES is planting corn. He has in about 30 acres all on our own land. Part of it he has plowed once and he has broke 12 acres of sod.

He expects to brake some more. If next week he will soon have it all broke up except what he wants for pasture. He will not have to rent any land next year. Our garden looks splended. We have been eating lettuce and radishes and onions for a week and peas in bloom. I hope you are having some better weather there by this time. We have had just enough rain to make things grow. I heard last night that they had another boy out to JOHN's. I expect you will hear of it befor this reaches you. We have not been out there this spring. When we could go the river was up and now theres so much work to do we can't go. How is Miss PECK, is she able to help her self any. I expect that you have been over to the dear old seminary to church and sunday school this morning, how much I should like to go there once more. I can imagine how it all looks there, so cool and nice in their (there) Oh dear, it almost makes me home sick.

Give my love to Miss STONE and tell her I often think of a pleasant summer that she was there when I went to school there. How plesent she made it for us all and how sorry we all were to leave school. well, I must close. Remember me kindly to all who inquire for me. CHARLEY, send love to you, don't wait as long as I have before you answer this but write soon. Father and mother are well. I have got 110 little chickens. Lots of love to yourself and family. I remain your trus. cos...

ANNIE

\* \* \* \* \*

Envelope: Gaylord, Kan. Jun 9, 1885

Gaylord Kansas

Dear Cousin May,

We received your letter today and was glad to hear from you. LONNIE said he thought he would get tired a riding. He would have to get off and walk. He said he thought he could not carry feed for his hog if he got there, with himself he would do well. He said he was afraid it would get drowned in the rivers. And he would have to get off his hog and hered it on the grass. My burthday day is the 25th of May, when does your birthday come? Our school lasts 3 weeks more. We got from 15 to 20 eggs a day. You wanted to know what we had got any chickens yet. Well, yes, we have got some. The neighbors give us a good many. Have you got much garden in yet. We have got a little. I have got peas, beans, lettuce, onions & radishes. Some of the neighbors have got water melons in but we haint. Well, I can't think of any thing to write so goodbye.

ANNIE D.

Remember me and don't forget you have a cousin in Kansas yet. But if seperation be our lot, dearest cousin forget me not.

Cousin ANNIE D.

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Washington, D. C. Jan 18, 9 A.M. (1886)

Address: Miss MAY PECK, DuQuoin, Ills. (Care of J. E. PECK)

Washington, D.C.

Jan 17, 1886

Dear Cousin MAY:

Received your very interesting letter this evening, but sorry to hear that your grandma is dead. This is a very cold week. a heavy snow storm saturday and then it got dreadful cold, froze



LETTERS FROM THE PAST

up every thing. Mamas flowers were wrapped all up, and they froze, it was all we could do to keep warm.

I am not going to school anywhere just now as our Washington Collegiate Institute broke up so I don't know where I will go next.

I did not go to sunday school but papa and mama went to church. This is about 9 oclock and I feel like I wanted to go to bed. I always tell by my eyes. All the children have gone to bed but myself and I ought to be there to.

I say MAY, I would like to have one of your pictures. Send me one in your next letter if you can. I would like to see what you look like.

How old did you say you were and what day of May, I have entirely forgotten, so base of me. Please answer and send me your picture.

As I must close it is getting late and I ought to be in bed, please excuse short letter, will write a longer one next time.

Good night to all from a loving cousin,  
MARY MILES

\* \* \* \* \*

Washington D.C.  
Dec 1st, 1886

Dear Cousin MAY;

This is Wednesday and nearly time I was in bed but I haven't any time to write to you but you know how it is yourself. I just have to get off to school by day light and don't get home then until after dark. That makes me away from home nearly 11 hours a day not. Where does my time come in to write to any body but I will try and get a line or two to you for I know you will think hard of me but you never mind me, just write as often as you can.

My grandma BROWN from Kansas is here visiting us and we are just having a grand time all together. Well they have all gone to bed and left me alone so I can write much more at present. Another year has nearly past and I hardly know any more than that I am one year older. Suppose you are fixing for christmas and you will have a nice time I know. Well will close for this time, write often as you can. Excuse this writing for I am writing this with my eyes shut.

Good night  
Sleep tight  
and don't let the chinties bight

Your loving cousin, MARY MILES Esq.

P.S. Please send your photograph as soon as possible. I am anxious to see you.

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Washington, D. C. May 2, 9 A.M. 1887

Address: Miss MAY PECK, DuQuoin, Perry Co. Illinois

Washington, D. C.  
May 1st, '87

Dear Cousin--

I received your welcome letter some two weeks ago, was very glad to hear from you, had just begun to think you had forgotten me. This has been a lovely day, wish it would be like it all summer. I wouldn't mind it being summer all the time. Papa has been writing letters all day except this afternoon he took mama out for a little buggy ride.

I am getting along real well in music, I can play "The old folks at home", took it for my last lesson. Wish you could step in, I would play you a tune. We have ten day holiday at school, then it will keep until the first of July. Just think, we only have two more (the?) holiday. Well the children are all crying to go to bed so I can hardly write. ARTHUR is trying to read also.

We haven't any flowers planted but we have our garden planted and papa had his oats planted the other day. Well, MAY, you just ought to come in here just now and see LOTTIE. She has been tearing paper for an hour and has just came out with her bangs all done up on paper. I can-not guess your riddle unless it is the clew you give. such funny riddles that I never heard of before. Well I will have to close for this time as I am to my journeys end. Please write often for I will look for a letter any time. Was very much pleased with my card you sent. Please send all



LETTERS FROM THE PAST

you can spair. Glad you liked my card. I sent and got a dozen.

Good by  
(No signature)

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Parrish Ill. Apr 10 1888

Address: Miss ADDIE E. PECK, Old DuQuoin, Perry Co. Ills.

Parrish, Ill.  
April 10th, 1888

Dear sister ADDIE,

In this letter I will enclose to you the money to come with. I want you to come immediately if MAY is so you can leave her. I don't know wheather you can do any good or not (but) you can try, keep it to yourself.

From your trouble sister,

LUCY BIDWELL

P.S. Come to Stay, even one day. I shall look every train, when you come come right to the house. I don't know what day you will be here as I will be at the trains, don't be uneasy untill you see me.

\* \* \* \* \*

(This letter had no envelope and did not have a date. It is presumed to follow the previous letter.)

Parrish, Ill.  
April 2d

Dear sister ADDIE, one and all,

I received your kind letter and hasten to answer it. I did not want you to get scared a tall. I only wanted you to come and talk to HERSCHELL. He had got awful sickness and I know he thought so much of you that by your talking to him might change him. He is good enough to me but I would not live with him and he a doing like he was. He don't drink any but he was getting sikless (?). He seems to think the world and all of me, but I could not see him doing like he was but he thought that I was a going to leave and he told me to stay and help to raise up JOE and he would promise he would act a man from now on and I think he will. I will try and eaze up there before long and see you all. How is HENRY a getting along. Is he a trying to make a crop. Don't be uneasy about HERSCHELL a mistreating me for he don't. When I see you I will tell you all about it. I will come before long, so good by.

Kiss MAY for me.

Sister LUCY

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Washington D.C. Mar. 16 6:30 P.M. C

Address: Miss MAY PECK, DuQuoin, Ill (Care of A. E. PECK)

Washington, D.C.  
March 14, 1889

My Dear Cousin MAY;

I hasten to answer your letter received this evening, so that you will know I got the last letter instead of the dead letter office. I will tell you very quickly the mistake instead of just saying Washington, D. C. you should say Pension Office, Middle Division and W.--D.C.

I had looked for a letter from you ever since I wrote to you but supposed you were taking your time. I am very sorry I did not get the other letter but it won't happen again if you direct as I say above.

Recieved your miniature also and am very much obliged. I don't think you look one but like you had been in a hurricane, you just imagine that. I think by your picture, if not mistaken, you have black eyes and hair, fair skin and a nose exactly like my papas and rather heavy set. Tell me if I am right. I will have my pictures taken very soon and send you one, expect you will run out of the house when you see my picture. I am so ugly. Would of had them taken before but

## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

have been very sick since I wrote to you, was under the doctors care for nearly two weeks and just able to get out of the house. I caught cold and it settled in my body and limbs so for a while I could not walk. I would set up and start to walk and would fall right down on the floor unless I would catch myself.

MARRIA is sitting at my right hand knitting her a pair of mittens, papa is reading the National Tribune. My little sister is reading a sunday school library book called Dotty Dimple. She is very much interested in it. The rest of the children have gone to bed. We have had very pleasant weather here all this winter also. Although it tried its self inauguration week by being just as muddy as it could well be and raining all the time.

Papa's Captain Mr. CHERNEY and his wife from Detroit visited us during inauguration week, had a splended time as they were as jolly as old King Cole. Made every thing lively, especally Captain CHERNEY.

I expect I shall go to Kansas this summer if nothing happens and papa may take a notion to go by your house. I should like very much to visit you, as I think we would have some very fine times.

I should like very much to have my cousin from Neb. write to me. Tell her when you write - I would appreciate a letter from her very much and would answer it promptly, expect I have a great many cousins I never heard of before - it I could just get them all together.

I attended an oyster supper last night and concert combined with a very pleasant time. Wish you could of been here to enjoy it with me, wish you could come down and pay me a nice long visit. What a nice time we could have. I would take you out sight seeing, the capitol, smithsonian institute, Treasury building, Pension building. War and Navy Departments and Washington Monument. That is five hundred and fifty-five feet high, If you wish you can (go) to the top of it, but for my part I would rather be excused. I can stand outside and look at it, that's enough for me. There is no end to the things you would see. They have lately founded a zoological garden where they have all kinds of animals from all over the world. I feel sure you would enjoy your self and besides you would be benefited a great deal by it.

Now, my unseen but dear cousin, I think I have written you a lot of things and will wonder if you will ever manage to get it read but you will let me know by answering very soon, and not let it get into the dead letter office for I don't wish to receive any dead letters if I can prevent it.

Hope this letter finds you all enjoying good health as it leaves us - I remain.

Your true cousin. MOLIE F. MILES

P.S. Maria says any body can read this letter as they run, and if you are as long reading it as I was writing you will certainly be sleepy. By the way will you please tell me your birthday, I have forgotten. I recieved a lovely silk neckerchief.

\* \* \* \* \*

No envelope

Old DuQuoin, April 6, 1889

Dear Cousin ADDIE

I received your letter a few weeks ago and now will try and answer it. We are having lovely weather now, almost like summer. The grass is green and peach trees are in bloom. children are going barefoot in DuQuoin, and parasols were seen on the streets the 21st of March. Oh, ADDIE, I wish you were here now, we could have such fine times. There are some nice girls here and all go to school at the seminary and have lots of fun. The seminary is a beautiful place to go to school and there they have lots of entertainment there. They had a entertainment and oyster supper combined on Washington's birthday the 22 of Feb. and now the young folks are fixing for a sunday school concert next sunday eve. and it is something nearly every month. LEYNTHICE ROSS is teaching a spring school this spring and MAGGIE KINCKLEY is teaching the old Duquoin school. KATY ROSS is as large as I am and a real nice girl. MARY is like her papa, can tell any thing that she thinks of that is not true. GUSSIE is a smart little boy, always at the head of his classes in school and EDNA is the youngest and the pet. Mrs. ROSS is a splendid mother to them and they think lots of her. We have 28 little chickens and 6 hens setting. we will milk five cows this summer. Cousin FRED and MARY from Washington are coming to make us a visit this summer. Expect MARY and I will have fine times but I do wish you could be here



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

too, I had a letter from MARY not long ago, and this is what she said to tell you: I should like very much to have my cousins from Neb. write to me, tell her when you write I would appreciate a letter from her very much and would answer it promptly. Her address is, Miss MARY NILES, Pension office, Middle Division, Washington, D.C. I have a letter she wrote to me on Christmas day I would send you to read if you would return it as I would like to keep it. MARY is a nice girl, you can tell that by reading one of her letters. I went over to see aunt MAGGIE one day last week and had a very pleasant time. Uncle EDWIN is getting old and feeble and I am afraid it will not be very long before death will take him away too, and then aunt MAGGIE will be the only one left.

Measles are here again this spring, it was too bad about cousin JENNIE's death. I had them last spring. Mrs. MARSTELLA had a cow bit by a mad dog last fall and about two weeks the cow went mad and they had to kill her. So now, Miss ADDIE, I want you to write soon and send your picture too, if you possible can. It must be a queer town where there ain't no gallery. I had seventeen taken Christmas for 25 cents.

Good by  
Your loving cousin, MAY PECK

Five years have passed away since last we said farewell

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No envelope

San Bernardino  
Sept 11th, 1889

Mrs. PECK, Dear friend,

I received your most welcome letter some time ago, but have been too busy to answer it as yet. We are all well but I am not very strong yet. I went to the coast and staid from Sunday till Thursday. I had a very good time and it was just lovely, so cool and nice. We are having very pleasant weather here now.

Tell mother to get rid of those young ones & take care of herself, & not do any more than she has to, for we will surely come home in the spring, if we have no bad luck. I am sorry to hear she is failing as fast. Do you think she will get through the winter? I am going to can some grapes this week. I have not put up any thing you but apricots. I want to put up peaches and tomatoes. We received a letter from Houston, Saturday. They are all well and he is going to be married Christmas. MARGARET has a boy 7 months and he weighs 30 pounds. I don't know when I will get those aprons done, sometime maybe. I am not able to run the machine yet. It has been so very warm that a person cannot gain strength very fast. As I am in a hurry I will close for this time and try and do better next and not wait so long. Write soon and often, I remain, as ever, your friend.

MATTIE TREW

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March 8, 1890

Dear ADDIE;

Tis hard to part from those we love  
Tis hard to part tis true  
But tis not so hard to part from some  
As tis to part from you

Ever Your Cousin  
MARY L. PECK

Old DuQuoin, Ill.

Dear MAY: I was glad to hear from you. But sorry to hear your best friend was going away to Arkansas. How lonesome you will be. What will GUS and LIBBIE do? Well, MAY, I must tell you about the baby. We call her RUBY. She has a round face, large deep blue eyes and dark hair, and as a matter of course is the prettiest, sweetest, best and nicest kid that ever was, BESSIE STONE not excepted. But don't tell LIBBIE so, for fear she wouldn't believe me. I am going to have her picture taken and send mother one then you can see what she looks like. I am going to put her in short clothes the last of next month. You said Grannie dear sent me her love, tell her I

## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

return it with the greatest of pleasure; so I have no earthly use for it. What has become of WILLIE WICKLIN? and how is Fido. Do you crochet any more? It does not seem possible for you to be almost grown, I can't see you as any thing but the little girl I used to tease so. I would like to see all of you very much. My won't we have a jolly time when I come back in the spring? I am going up town this afternoon and will get and send you some ribbon.

Write soon and often and tell me all about every body. Do you ever hear any thing about brother SPANGLER or ELE. "Its a wonder he don't take a liking to you". I am making a lovely tidy out of number 4D creame linen thread.

I will close my letter for this time.

My love and best wishes to all

MATTIE TREW to MAY

Give my love to mother.

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Campbell Hill, Feb. 29, 1889

Address: JOE PECK, Esq. DuQuoin, Ills.

Campbell Hill Isl.

Oct 9, 1889

Friend JOSEPH

I shall not undertake to explain why I have neglected you so long, nor ask why you have not stirred my up with a letter before this, but as the spirit moves me to write I will drop you a line. I am very unwell as I am suffering from chills and for that reason shall not write at length, that is nothing controversial nor philosophical. times are exceedingly stringent and dull among, as you know, to prizes of and of cultures of crops. I have done but one respectable painting job this season and little or nothing in prospect.

Last winter (and each winter) I do considerable in crayon portraits working for critical people in the town, prices varying--framed--from \$20.00 up to \$35.00. Expect to do something again this winter.

I was up at the encampment two days in the rain and saw everybody and nobody. That is to say, few that I ever met to my knowledge. I met there FALLON PARRANT and JAUBERT of the old company and heard of GWYN, ULRICI, HICKMAN etc. STEBBINS lives here and I occasionally meet TOM PYLES and S. MOORE. BUCKLES also visited me recently.

JOE, everything being agreeable we think of coming out this fall on a little visit. I also want to see one JACOB ROBINSON of Elkville about making him a picture. Do you know anything about him as to circumstances etc.

My father has had a long and sickness but in spite of advanced age 77 is about well again. CHARLES became uncontrollable and is in Anna Hospital for care and treatment. I have been to see him and he is kindly and well cared for.

Well, what do you think, read and write? Do you take any interest in the new Labor movement. I mean the organized philosophical movement headed by HENRY GEORGE and the New York Standard. Also where are your sympathies in the Chicago Anarchist trial. I think this much of them - philosophy is wrong but their hearts are right. Whatever may have been their mistakes we should remember that their voices are raised in the interest of that vast army called the common people and that the real criminals are the well few oppressors who by a thousand methods of swindling give occasion for extreme language and rash acts. All send regards.

Respectfully etc.

Your friend as always.

A. O. GENUNG

My little girl FRANCES was in Duquoin a week this summer and was very anxious to get out to see MAY but failed to do so. Any publications containing your writings or anything which you think I will be interested in will be gladly read by me.

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## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

Post Mark: Neb., Nov 18, 1889

Address: Miss MAY PECK, DuQuoin, Perry Co. Ills

Kimball, Neb. Nov 17, 1889

My dear cousin,

Why in the world don't you write? What is the matter! I have awaited for ever so long for a letter from you so I will write again. Well, we are all well as usual. We have a new boy at our house, came the 25 of October. Mamma is up and both are getting along very nicely. We are having splendid weather now but have had three heavy snow falls and some very cold weather. I am not at home now, nor I do not think I will be very much this winter. Are you going to school this winter? and who is your teacher. I think I will teach another term of school and then go off to some high school. I have a chance to learn telegraphy and I believe I would like that better than teaching. Oh Dear, I get awful lonesome and homesick here. I want to go to Illinois as soon as I can and I mean to some day. How is Aunt ADDIE's health. I have feared she was worse, because of you not writing before. I wish you was here with me to day, we would go to the creek, it is such a pretty creek and gather sage brush. Do you have nice times there? I hope you do. I have not forgot the fine times we used to have before we left Ills. I have never been contented since we left there. I liked Kans. very much but it never seemed homelike to me. And I like the country here well enough but I miss the fun and amusements we had in Kans. I guess we have plenty of them here, but there was too much of it in Kans. and I went so much, that I can't get used to it now. MAY, I want you to tell me all the news from home. I have none to tell you. You said CYNTHIA R. was teaching but you did not say where. What has become of ANNA GARNETSON? She wrote to me once and I don't remember whether I answered it or not. anyway she never wrote again. Where is she? If she is there yet I would like to hear from her. what are you going to do at Thanksgiving? And where are you going?

I have an invitation to Sidney to an entertainment and supper. I suppose I will go since there is so little to go to. MAY, you must overlook such poor writing for I have a dreadful headache this morning. Now, MAY, if you don't write as soon as you get this, I'll feel like thumping you. Give my love to all and a good share to yourself. Write soon.

Your loving Cousin, ADDA P.

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Post Mark: Illegible

Address: Miss MAY PECK, DuQuoin Illinois, Perry County, Ill.

Kimball Nebr. Aug 16, 1890

Dear Cousin MAY,

I received your letter a short time ago and was very glad to hear from you and would have answered sooner but we are so busy getting ready for the teachers Institute which commences next monday, but my trunk is packed and all the boxes are filled. We are going to board in town as it is to far to come from home. I don't know if I will teach this winter or not as I want to take a course in short hand and Telegraphy, but am not sure I will. ANNIE is going to teach this autumn. She has a school near home and in a good neighborhood. We came near having our pictures taken last week, by a travelling photographer at \$8 a dozen and paid in advance at that. I saw some pictures that were taken and they were awful poor so I thought I would wait and go up to Cheyenne and get some there. There was two travelling shows in town this winter and laughed so much that our sides acke yet. Papa has been painting in town for two weeks or more and has work engaged for most of the fall. He talks some of going up to the Black Hills, Dakota in the spring. ELMER B. is somewhere near there, says there is quite a boom there, railroad is being built and new mines, so there is great demand for carpenters, as well as a good place for stock. When did aunt LUCY go to Missouri and where at. I suppose JOE ALVIN is a great big boy by this time. LOUIE is quite a boy, good to work, can earn a dollar a day, but he is a holy terror, almost to live, and just torments me about his beaux when ever he can. But he is too big to write love letters to the girls or ride the pigs. I will send you the pieces of some of my dresses I got to wear at the Institute. I am glad CYNTHIA is teaching and is so well liked, I always liked her so much. We used to correspond. KATIE must be nearly as old as I am. I should like so much to see them. Do you expect to teach. I don't suppose there are many girls left in the neighborhood that I

## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

used to know. But I want to go back and see them all once more. I often wonder if I ever will. MAY, I have not got my paper out that would do for your album so I will write one off and send it the next time I write. I was surprised to hear MERIOCIE STOUT was engaged to be married. I can't think of him as a young man. He always seems like the boy trying to imitate the rooster. I suppose she must be a fine lady. What has become of PERCY G. and AURA P. I presume she is married now. It does not seem to me as though the young folks have changed there, that I would know every one were I to see them. But I doubt if any of them would recognize me. We got a letter from Uncle GEORGE and aunt L. a short time ago. aunt fell from the buggy not long since and broke two ribs. It seems Uncle got out of the buggy to get a switch for a whip and aunt L. was trying to help him get in again when he drew her over the wheel. They were going to CHARLIE CURRAVANTS wedding when it happened. Well, MAY, I must go to bed, it is nearly eleven oclock and CLARENCE was sick last night and wouldn't let any one but me take care of him, so excuse poor writing and write soon. Love to all, your loving cousin

ADDA D.

Baby RAY can almost walk and thinks himself a very important member of the family, where is uncle HENRY and how are they getting along? Good night P.s. Don't wait to write but do it right away. I am very homesick to see you all.

ADDA D.

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Illegible

Address: Mrs. ADDIE E. PECK, Perry Co. DuQuoin, Ill

Firthe Hill

Aug 13, 1896

Dear sister and family,

Your letter to hand few days ago & have not looked for you this hot weather. I knew the weather was to hot for you, we are all up but the hot weather has nearly kill me. It seems that it will smother me to death. There is lots of sickness and lots of death. We have a funeral nearly every day. If the weather don't turn cooler we will all die. I hope this will find you all well. Just as it seems as the weather gets a little cooler I will look for you. When you come bring me some pears if you get any and bring me fathers bible. I want it to read. I am getting so blind I can't read fine print. We did not mow hardly any wheat. I guess we will make corn enough to do us but this dry hot weather has ruin it some. I don't know a thing about HENRYs folks. It is so hot I cannt go there and he don't come here. The last time I was there he said he did not have clothes to come to see me. I am a going to draft him a letter to day. M. B. is not well and little HENRY has been sick. He had the hardest fit I ever saw. We thought he was dead but is better. now. Be sure and come when it gets cooler. Love to all sisters.

LUCY

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Carbonado, Nov. 19, 9 A.M. 1906

Address: Miss MAY PECK, DuQuoin, Ill.

Carbonado, Wash. Nov 11 /06 (1906)

Dear friend MAY,

This is the third time I've started to write you so maybe I will make it this time. we are all kicking yet and like the country fine. I am so busy I don't have time for any theing extra. The things I sent you form the prints of a strip MARIAN VAN and I took of the bunkers, thats where they take the rock out of the coal. I was on a lots prettier trip than the Golconda one. Mts. high up on one side with springs of water here and there coming out of them. Then the wagon road thru a deep canyon, then the river, then Mts. again. We saw where there had been quite a Mt. slide, took trees and everything. Did you get your postal card and Tacoma in a clam shell? I sent several different cards to the neighborhood. Did EVA get hers? I am sorry she is in such a bad shape. Tell Mrs. TUCKER I'd like to see her, would like to see all back there but I wouldn't live there again if they would deed me all of it and bind me to live on it.

On lock 25 I helped with a big dinner of the Rebekahs. I got \$2.50 for the day. They served dinner and supper to 30 people. We had a nice time if we did work. We kept beans warm, made



## LETTERS FROM THE PAST

coffee and tea and peeled, mashed potatoes and helped to set the tables and dish up. Peeled 1 peck and a big trowsack of potatoes, had 50 chickens and every thing else in proportion. I will send you some souvenirs of it. I am going to Tacoma before xmas. I just have lots more work of all kinds than I can do. I help at the hotel lots too. Always a dollar and 1/2 a day. Have pretty near learned how to run one myself - ha, ha - but I have learned lots about it. RUBIE has moved about 5 miles from us. I am going up there next sat. night, her and babe came and stayed a day and night this last week. BABE is a dandy, the happiest kid, always ready to grin. I started to make her short clothes, made the dress you sent and got some more done. Sold 65 yds. of my carpet next morning after it came, have enough rags to make another and several waiting to get me to weave. Get 12 1/2 to 15 cents for weaving here. Yarn is about the same price here as there and lots to do in it. I am comfortably situated next to the post office and hotel. I think the carpet you made me very pretty indeed. I have mislaid your letter also. What I had written you before, if I find the one I wrote, I'll send it too. Well MAY, I did laugh over the corpse affair, it must have originated in a diseased brain. Tell them I brought some links and screws out of it as I came. I'm awful glad I didn't sell it, been looking for LIZZIE every day to see when babe was born. Tell her to write to the Dr. at Carbonado or the hotel lady, both were there and theres only one of each in town. I suppose WILLARDS have moved by this time. How did the meeting turn out at Old Town. It's too bad about EDITH. The kids are doing fine at school and we have a good school. They go every day only a little ways to go on home for dinner. I am dying to hear from you but just seems as though I never get time to write you, and my letters are for you and your mama both. we often speak of you. I wish you could take the trip here. There is grand scenery all over this country. A man in this town trapped a killed a bear about 2 weeks ago and some more came through with some deer. We are having fine weather, some days it rains a day at a time, but Oh how nice when it stops. We are in the heart of the rocky Mts. I am much stouter than when I came and the children are fat as pigs.

I made 25 pair of sash curtains for the hotel last week and 8 towels and hemmed 4 strips of carpet and washed 1 day at hotel, brought me \$4.50, sash finished a shaull (shawl) and done lots of work for myself besides RUBIEs sewing. Well I am going to help put up the hotel bucket for tommorrow so will write more after a while. There will be about 25 buckets for this shift and there is 2 shifts besides.

Carbonado 18

Dear MAY, I will finish my last sundays letter but goodness knows when it will start to you. We haven't had but 1 train for a week on account of wash Mts. The Chinook winds melted the snow of the Cascade Mts. till the whole country is flooded. We and Kribies are high and dry but it was something terrible to watch the river rise and destroy the mining outfit. It took both bridges across to the mines, a lot of the RR tracks and almost let the boilers of 1 mine in the river. As we stood at the top of the incline watching it, there came a slide across from us, tons of rock and dirt and trees and OH what a racket, bit this high water business always comes in November.

I suppose you will be glad if I say there is no. 1 that I don't like about this country but I promised to write my dislikes as well as likes. I will try to send you the papers for this distructive time. VAN went to Kribies yesterday. Well, MAY, I must tell you how we had breakfast this morning. I had just got up and started the fire when one of the hotel girls knocked at the door and wanted to know now soon I'd have breakfast. I told her as soon as I built the kitchen fire. She says Mrs. MILES has something for you. I hadn't much more than got round to the stove again till in she came with a big dish of ham, eggs, fried potatoes and coffee. Now, she says, come and let us bring the table in and you are ready for breakfast. Wasn't that all right? I told her I wished I had stayed in bed and let her brought it to the bed. She laughed. Every body is working to day, they are hustling to get things in running order again.

Its lovely and sunshiny today but its the first day for a wee, and last night was the coldest night yet. Well, MAY, I got the Nat. Bank card this morning. the mail came up last night so I will start my letter today. RUBIEs were here yesterday. I wish you could see BABE. She is the best kid I ever say. For goodness sake don't send any writing material here. I can't use what I've got. But I will try not to wait so long again. I have to get breakfast yet but I wanted to get this off this morning so good bye with best love to all.

LETTERS FROM THE PAST

MATTIE

MAY, please give me CALLIEs address again. I have packed the letter away since when and can't find it.

\* \* \* \* \*

Post Mark: Vesta, Wash. May 7, 1907

Address: Miss MAY PECK, DuQuoin, Ill.

Vesta, Wa. May 6 - '07

Dear Mrs. PECK and MAY,

The paper containg the sad news was brought to me last Thursday. It did not surprise me for all winter and spring I have feared the worst was coming.

I well know how hard it is to speak or write words that can console is such bereavement as yours and when I speak such words it seems to me they fall shorter of the mark than those many other persons say, but be it as it may, you sure have my sympathy and the assurance that in your sorrow, I remember you.

As I saw Mr. Peck, he was a good husband and father, to me he appeared a perfect gentleman. I can't recall an impolite nor unkind act.

When you feel more like writing I shall be glad to hear more about his last illness.

With love to both. I remain your friend,

SALLIE GILLETTE

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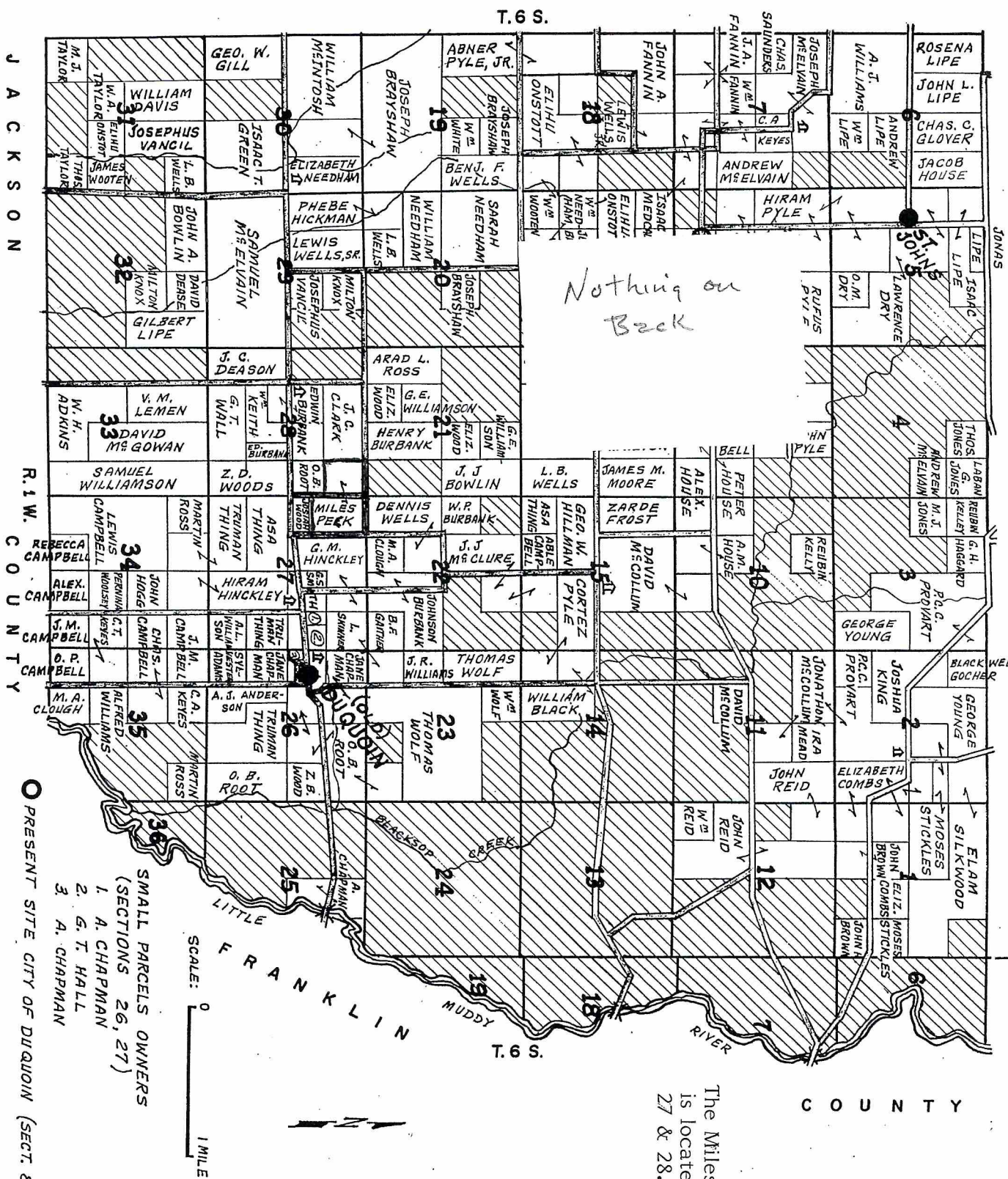
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**T 6 S, R 1 W**

R.1 W.  $\longleftrightarrow$  R.1 E.



The Miles Peck farm is located in Sec. 27 & 28.